PARTISAN REVIEW

MARCH-APRIL, 1951

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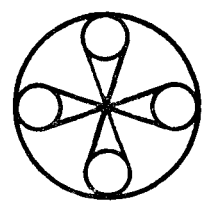

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James Agee

THE MORNING WATCH

My soul fleeth unto the Lord
before the morning watch: I say,
before the morning watch.

—PSALM CXXX

I

In hidden vainglory he had vowed that he would stay awake straight through the night, for he had wondered, and not without scorn, how they, grown men, could give way to sleep on this night of all nights in their life, leaving Him without one friend in His worst hour; but some while before midnight, still unaware that he was so much as drowsy, he had fallen asleep; and now this listening sleep was broken and instantly Richard lay sharp awake, aware of his failure and of the night.

Too late: already it was time: now it was the deepest hour of the deepest night. Already while he slept, with wrathful torches and with swords and staves they had broken among the branches of the Garden; Judas, gliding, had stretched against that clear Face his serpent's smile; Peter in loyal rage had struck off the dazed servant's ear and He in quiet had healed him: and without struggle had yielded Himself into their hands. Could ye not watch with me one hour? No, Lord, his humbled soul replied: not even one: and three times, silently, gazing straight upward into the darkness, he struck his breast, while tears of contrition, of humility and of a hunger to be worthy, solaced his eyes, and awakened his heart. O yes it was an hour more deep by far than the Agony and Bloody Sweat: no longer alone, unsure; resolved, and taken. That was already fully begun which could come only to one ending. By now He stood peaceful before Pilate, the one calm and silence amid all that tumult of malice and scorn and guile and hatred and beating

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of unhabitual light through all the sleepless night of spring; while in the dark porchway, even at this moment, the servant girl persistently enquired of Peter and he in fury and in terror denied his Lord: now the bitter terrible weeping and now, saluting this mortal morning, the cock's triumphal and reproaching cry. A deep, deep hour. Soon now the sentence and the torment, the scourging, the mocking robe, the wreathed, wretched Crown: King of the Jews.

O God, he silently prayed, in solemn and festal exaltation: make me to know Thy suffering this day. O make me to know Thy dear Son's suffering this day.

Within Thy Wounds hide me.

Suffer me not to be separated from Thee.

From the Malicious Enemy defend me.

By a habit of their own, meanwhile, his hands searched and tested along the undersheet, and now they told him that this time he had wet the bed so little that by morning nobody would know. He let out a long thankful breath and looked down along his bed.

All he could see at first throughout the long room was a kind of gelatin glimmer at the alcoved windows, and the aisled ends of the iron cots at right angles to his own: but when the foot which had awakened him lifted from the yielding board and it creaked again he saw in his mind's eye, large and close, the coarse-ribbed shambling stocking, flecked with lint, and knew that Father Whitman must be very tired; for to judge by the hissing sound, his feet scarcely left the floor. He wondered whether Father Whitman was sleeping at all, tonight.

Father Whitman touched a foot and whispered: "Quarter of four."

"Okay Fathuh," Hobe Gillum said in his clear hard voice.

"Quiet," Father Whitman said sharply.

"Okay Fathuh," Hobe whispered.

Now that the priest came near as silently as he could between the ends of the cots, Richard could see the tall ghostly moving of his white habit.

Father Whitman stopped at Jimmy Toole's cot, touched his foot, and whispered: "Quarter of four." Jimmy mumbled something in a light sad rapid voice and stuck his head under his pillow.

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Father Whitman stepped between the cots and touched his shoulder. "Quarter of four," he whispered more loudly.

"Cut it out," Jimmy whined in his sleep.

Richard heard Hobe's knees hit the floor.

Father Whitman shook Jimmy's shoulder. "Quarter of——"

"*Quit* it you *God damn*—" Jimmy snarled, wrenching aside the pillow; then, with servile Irish charm: "Aw sure Father, I din know it was *you* Father."

At the far end of the dormitory there was a wild stifled snicker.

"Time to get up," Father Whitman whispered.

The snickering became happier and happier. Father Whitman spoke more loudly into the darkness: "Now cut that out fast or you'll be sorry you ever started it."

The snickering persisted as if uncontrollably, but now it was blunted in a pillow. Father Whitman ignored it. "Better get straight out of bed," he told Jimmy. "You'll go back to sleep."

Hobe was buttoning his shirt.

Without a word Jimmy rolled out of bed onto his knees and buried his head in his arms.

Now that Father Whitman came toward him, Richard shut his eyes. When he knew he was about to be touched he opened his eyes and whispered, "All right Father." He saw the stopped hand and, much nearer and larger than he had expected, the beaten, enduring horse face; he became aware of his deceitfulness and was ashamed of it.

"All right," Father Whitman said. Bet he says quarter of four, Richard thought. "Quarter of four," Father Whitman said.

"Yes Father."

"Put your shoes on downstairs," he whispered, and turned away. "Put your shoes on downstairs," he told Hobe, "and don't let Jimmy go to sleep again."

"Okay Fathuh," Hobe said, gallusing himself into his overalls.

"And don't you dawdle when you're done," Father Whitman told him. "You kids see to it you come right back here to bed."

"Yes suh Fathuh."

"Don't think I won't be watching for you."

"No suh Fathuh."

Richard knelt by his cot and sank his face in his hands. O God,

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he prayed, I thank Thee that I did not wet the bed this night—enough to get caught, he added carefully, remembering Thou God seest me; for Jesus' sake Amen.

He said swiftly to himself the prayer Father Weiler had taught them as enough when, for any good reason, you did not have time enough for more: I praise my God this day I give myself to God this day I ask God to help me this day Amen.

Gripping his hair and pressing the heels of his hands tightly against his closed eyes he tried as hard as he could to realize what was happening as he had in the moment of waking. But now he could realize only what a special night this was, what grave and holy hours these were. There seemed to be a strange stillness and power in the air as there always was on very special occasions and never at ordinary times; it made him feel dry, light of weight, very watchful, expectant and still, and it almost made his scalp tingle. It was something like the feeling of his birthday, and of Christmas, and of Easter, and it was still more like the feeling he now seldom and faintly recalled, during the morning just after he learned of his father's death, and during the day he was buried. But it was not really like any of these, or anything else, except itself. These were the hours of Our Lord's deepest Passion. For almost forty days now this feeling had grown and deepened, not without interruption, for he had not managed perfectly to keep either his public or his secret Lenten Rules; yet he had been sufficiently earnest and faithful, and sufficiently grieved in his failures, that the growth had been deeper and more cumulative and more rewarding than he had ever known before; and now he was coming into the heart of it, the holiest and most solemn of its shrines, with heart and soul prepared and eager. Already it was no longer Maundy Thursday, the birthday of the Eucharist; that sorrowfully jubilant magnificence was turned under the world; already the world was brought a few hours forward into the most gravely majestic of all days, Good Friday; already the wheel was so turned that high upon darkened heaven white Easter dazzled, suspended, the crown of the year, like the already trembling start of an avalanche. Easter was very soon now, so soon, with his throat brimming with its hymns and his soul ardent for release and celebration, that it was difficult to be patient; yet his faith and absorption were such that at the same time he came into this day as sorrowing

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and careful as if Christ had never been crucified before, and could never rise from the dead. Yet now that he desired to retrieve his waking awareness he could not, but only knelt, sad, trying to taste the peculiar quality of the night and to distinguish it from other auras of momentousness, until, realizing how he had misled himself, he gripped his hair and pressed his eyeballs the more tightly, repeating in his heart: Jesus our Lord is crucified. Jesus our Lord is crucified. He saw the Head.

Thrown with fury, a shoe struck the wall next Jimmy's bed: the noise broke upon Richard with sickening fright. Then Hobe's voice:

"All right some mothuhf——kin sonofabitch is agoana git the livin s——t beat outn him if I find out who throwed that!"

"Shet yer God damn mouf," said a coldly intense, deeper voice at the far end of the dormitory.

"Yeah fer Chrise sakes *shut up,*" said another voice, as several neutral voices said "Shut up."

In the rigid silence Richard and Jimmy dressed quickly while Hobe waited. Carrying their shoes they stole barefoot on tiptoe from the room and along the hall and past the iron cot which had been set up by the stairhead for this one night for Father Whitman. They could just make out how he lay there in the dark in his long white habit, giving off a current of silent and ominous power because they could not be sure as they passed whether he was asleep or aware of them; the clacking of his tin clock filled the pine stairwell with its flagrant loudness. They tried hard not to creak the stairs. The pit of Richard's stomach still felt as it did when, without being too mad or too desperate to care, he knew it was impossible not to fight. By trying hard he was able to restore whole to his mind the thorn-crowned image of his Lord, but now it was not as he had seen it in prayer beside his cot but was very little different from a pious painting he knew: the eyes rolled up in a way that seemed affected, and in his cold sickness the image meant little to him. It was not until they came onto the back porch that the open night put them once more at their ease.

"Sonofabitchin mothuhf——kin bastud," Hobe said. "At shoe bettah be gone by mawnin or *some* bastudly c——ksuckuh's agoana be sorry."

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"Aw shut up Hobie," Jimmy said. "This ain't no time to talk like that."

"Hell do *I* keer," Hobe said. "*I* hain't been to Confession yet."

But he started on down the steps without saying anything more.

"What happened?" Richard asked.

"Jis trine wake up Jimmy," Hobe said. "God All Mighty Christ, can't even wake nobody up in this friggin School—"

Richard followed them down the steps. He was glad he had learned hardly even to think of saying anything. If Jimmy told Hobie to shut up and quit cussing Hobie would take it off of him, they were buddies; but by now he knew enough to keep *his* mouth shut. He felt uneasy, though, because he was glad he had not sworn. That was like being thankful you were not as other men and that was one of the worst sins of all; the Pharisee.

He had forgotten all about the shoes he carried and now that unexpectedly, for the first time this year, he felt the ground against the bare soles of his feet it was as if, fumbling among clothes in a dark closet, he had put his hand on living flesh. Even though the ground in this schoolyard was skimmed with dusty gravel, its aliveness soared through him like a sob and lifted his eyes in wonder upon the night. There was no moon and what few stars were out, were made faint by a kind of smiling universal milky silence, not fog, or even the lightest kind of mist, but as if the whole air and sky were one mild supernal breath. Downhill in the Chapel a line of small windows meekly smoldered, dark orange; he followed his companions and saw that they too were carrying their shoes. When they came to the lawn beyond their building they left the gravel; the ground, with its scarce new grass, felt like a fish. There was a thick oak near the center of the lawn and Hobe and Jimmy, as they passed, stung it several times expertly with gravel. It had not occurred to Richard to pick up gravel and now he was glad, for he was sure he would have missed as often as hit.

II

The night smelled like new milk; the air which exhaled upon them when they opened the side door of the Chapel was as numb and remote as the air of a cave. Without knowing it they

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hesitated, subdued by the stagnant darkness and its smell of waxed pine and spent incense. Across the unlighted nave the open door of the Lady Chapel brimmed with shaken light; but just at their left, through the door to the vestry, came a friendlier and more mundane light, a delicious smell, and the tired grinding of the voice they most admired in the world. When he became aware of their hesitation beside this partly closed door, George Fitzgerald spoke to them with a formality as unaccustomed and gentle as if a dead body lay in the room behind him and they came in, silent and shy. By the loud hurrying little clock it was still only four minutes to four. They squatted on their bare heels against the wall and looked on, their six eyes emphatic in the sleepless light.

The inward wall of this long corridor was hung solid with cassocks, and they were all lengths from a size almost big enough for the giant sad boy they all called Undertaker, to the all but baby size of Dillon Prince. At first Richard wondered where all the cottas were; in the laundry for Easter, he realized. The room was so weakly lighted by candlestubs that at the far end it was hardly possible to distinguish the red cassocks from the black. Just within the surer light, his jaw and his shoulders sloping more heavily even than usual with fatigue and with his low posture, Willard Rivenburg sat on a folding-chair which gave out dangerous splintering noises whenever he stirred. It was he who was talking, aimlessly, quietly, almost in his sleep; and Richard could see that George and Lee Allen answered him only so often as courtesy required, never turning their attention from their work. Not only were they Prefects; it was also believed by some of the older people that they alone among the boys now at the School, might have a Vocation. They were in their last year now and it was generally understood that they were both praying hard for this to be made clear to them before they graduated. It was their privilege, tonight, to trim and change the candles and to remove and replace the withering flowers, and now white-girdled, incongruous in red cassocks, they stood wearily beside a soup plate, replying gravely in short words while, their eyes bright with the lateness of the hour and fixed in the profound attentiveness of great scientists, they revolved candlestubs between thumb and forefinger, just above a flame, and watched the meltings add themselves to the already considerable cone of wax and tallow which they had developed

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on the plate. The shining melt spilled roundly, rambling and congealing; wherever it ridged, they smoothed it delicately with their fingertips. From the apex of this rounded cone sprang three long fiery wicks.

Because they were to be up all night these two had been forgiven the fast and had supplied themselves against possible hunger. But neither had yet eaten or drunk, nor did either privately intend to unless, as seemed unlikely, he became too faint or too sleepy to attend properly to his share of the work. Their coffee frothed so noisily over its can of Sterno rather because this enhanced their feeling of privilege and maturity; Willard was drinking some while he talked although, Richard reflected, it was long after midnight, when the fast began. He had also practically finished off a box of Fig Newtons.

The coffee was so strong that it empurpled the wall of the cup, and its smell was almost as enviably masculine as that of white lightning. The three younger boys kept respectfully quiet and looked on, eagerly and sleepily. They watched now the lapped purple rings in the slanted cup, now the shining of the living wax and its satin look where it had slowed and had been smoothed, now the strong loose smoky flame and the hypnotized faces which leaned above it, and now the reckless primitive profile and the slash-lined blue-black cheek of the great athlete Willard Rivenburg, whom they had never seen in quite such quiet intimacy. Nobody knew for sure just how old Willard was, but he looked as many men can only at thirty or so, and then only if they have been through a war, or years of the hardest kind of work. Richard tried to imagine why he was here tonight. He was fairly sure it was not for any kind of religious reason: Willard had been confirmed, and made his Confession and his Communion, but it was obviously just as a matter of course; when he took his turn serving Mass or swinging the Censer or carrying the Crucifix he was never exactly irreverent yet he always looked as if secretly he might be chewing tobacco; it looked as odd and out of place, somehow, as watching a horse dressed up in cassock and cotta and doing these things. He never even crossed himself at a hard time in a game, the way some of the others did. No, he wouldn't be here because he felt pious. It might be because everybody and everything on the place was thinking about just these things that were happening, and moving around them; a kind of shadow and stillness

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came over everything during Holy Week and it might be that Willard felt this and was made uneasy by it. But mainly it must be just that he was much too grown-up to be able to stand all the silly rules, and tame hours, and good behavior, that were expected of living in a school; he must be even gladder than the little boys were to grab at any chance to break out of that routine, especially anything that would give him an excuse for staying up so long after hours. And yet, Richard reflected, Willard needed and took an awful lot of sleep, dropping off in dull classrooms or wherever he had to sit still, except for eating, as easily as a colored man or a dog. But maybe all that sleep was why he was able to be awake now, though as a matter of fact he wasn't really more than half awake, not nearly as wide awake as Richard felt. But then probably he had been up all night, and probably it wasn't for the first time in his life either.

In some way which it did not occur to him to think about or try to understand, Richard felt a warm rich comforting kind of pride in him and sense of glory as he watched him, as much, in a far quieter and even happier way, as when he watched his almost magical ability in sports; and he began to feel a sense of honor and privilege in having this surprising chance to be so near him and to watch him so closely, to really see him. For normally, when Willard was not playing or practicing or sleeping or eating, he was kidding with somebody, in a loudly reckless, crazy way which was a pleasure to see because everything Willard did was a pleasure to see, but was impossible to see through; but now he wasn't kidding at all, only talking quietly and steadily like a grown man, among others whom he treated as grown men. He was finishing up about his grandfather who had come over from Switzerland to settle way back on the Mountain and who had never bothered to learn much English, and he was saying the few words and phrases of German he himself knew, and Richard was deeply impressed in realizing that Willard, who always seemed to him to know about as little as anyone could, except as an athlete and captain of genius and a powerful and experienced man, actually knew words in a foreign language. He himself was accustomed to feel a good deal of complacency because with Father Fish's help he had learned several hundred words of French, but now he felt ashamed of himself, and resolved to learn German, which seemed to him a much more virile language.

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He was watching with shy and particular interest the hump between Willard's heavy shoulders, which he had often wondered about but never yet had the chance to examine so privately. It was almost as if Willard were slightly hunchbacked, the low way he always carried his head and sloped his shoulders and the way this hump bulged out just below the base of his neck; yet if he were deformed, he could not have such ability and strength. It must be a very greatly developed muscle, Richard realized, yet it was a funny place to have a muscle; he felt there now on his own body and there wasn't even the beginning of a muscle there; just bone. Could it be bone? But that would be a deformity; and on Willard, more than any other thing, it was what made him unique among others, and marked his all but superhuman powers. Whenever he had done anything physically creditable Richard carried his head low, let his mouth hang open, and tried to hump his back, scarcely knowing of it any more; and so, though it was not generally realized, did many other boys in this school.

"Hey you," Lee said, and startled, they looked: one minute past four. Richard felt a spasm of shame: could ye not watch with me one hour? Besides, they were keeping somebody over his time. "*Jesus!*" Hobe Gillum said, and they stood up quickly. Both of the boys in cassocks ducked in shocked acknowledgement of the Name and Willard's dark face brightened with his satanic parody of falsetto laughter. Lee Allen said with unusually kind gravity: "I sure would hate to have to report anyone for cussin right in Chapel, and on Good Friday too." Hobe's eyes turned Indian, with pride toward Willard, in defiance toward Lee. "Aw forget about it Lee," George Fitzgerald said, "he just wasn't thinking." "I don't want to report you or nobody else," Lee said. "You just watch your mouth, Hobie." "He didn't mean anything," Richard said; and even before everyone looked at him and said nothing, he was miserable. "Better put your shoes on you kids," George said, and with relief Richard sank his hot face over his shoelaces. They felt contempt for him, he was sure, and he felt contempt for himself. Willard thought better of Hobe for cussing than of him for standing up for him, and so did he. Lee jumped on Hobie because Willard's cackling about it bothered him and he couldn't jump on Willard. If it hadn't been Good Friday and Richard had spoken up like that, he knew that somebody would

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have said, coldly, "Well look who's talking." Keep your mouth shut, he kept whispering within himself intensely. Just keep your fool mouth shut. And as they left the room he tried to exorcise the feelings of injustice, self-pity and pain by crossing himself quickly and surreptitiously. Fine time to go worrying about your*self*, he sneered at himself.

The nave replied to their timid noises with the threatening resonance of a drumhead. Not even the sanctuary lamps were lighted, but the night at the windows made just discernible the effigies and the paintings and the crucifix, no longer purple veiled but choked in black, and the naked ravagement of the High Altar. The tabernacle gawped like a dead jaw. By this ruthless flaying and deracination only the skeleton of the Church remained; it seemed at once the more sacred in dishonor, and as brutally secular as a boxcar. To cross its axis without the habitual genuflection felt as uneasy as to swim across a sudden unimaginable depth, and as Richard turned and bowed before the central devastation he realized: nothing there. Nothing at all; and with the breath of the Outer Darkness upon his soul remembered the words: And the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain.

But here in peace and victory before the adoration of all creatures past and breathing and uncreated, shrined and enthroned, starred round with unabating light and with the stars of all the fields of spring as well, exiled there yet abides throughout this night the soul and substance of the everliving God Who shall, within these few hours now, be restored to His High Altar and there devoured, leaving His whole Church desecrate and unconsoled until the hour of His glorious Resurrection from the Dead. Tied in its white veil, stifled, a huge masked Head, a thinly clouded Sun, the monstrance stood from the top of the tabernacle and broke at its center a dense tissue of flowers and light: candles it seemed by thousands, spear-high and merely tall, and short, and guttering, each an abiding upright fiery piercing and, crisp and wearying, withering, dying, the frugal harvest of the dawn of the year: from faint orchards the last apple blossoms, still tenderly raveling their slow-borne blizzard; branches of mild-starred dogwood and of the hairy wild azalea, pink and white, from the mulled gray woods, and little fistfuls of those breathless violets which break the floor of winter, even the rare may-apple, the twinleaf, whose bloom stays just a day; and, of the first shivering

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domestic flowers, cold jonquils, crowds of them, greenish with chill or butter yellow or flaming gold, and clear narcissus, reaching, bowing, staring, fainting in vases and jars of metal and glass and clay and in drinking glasses and mason jars and in small and large tin cans, all these each in their kind and sufferance bore witness before God while they might. Few of these early flowers have strong fragrance, or any, yet the heat and brightness and the fragrance brought forth by the burning wax and tallow and by the heat in the closed room, all one wall of dizzying dazzle, were such that it was at first almost as difficult to breathe the freighted air as to breathe water, and this air was enriched the more by the devotions of those who knelt subsumed within the trembling light; and at the instant of stepping into this hot and fragrant gold, going upon one knee and gazing upon the blind rondure of the monstrance and the thousand-pointed blossoming of fire and flower, his heart was lifted up and turned vague and shy as the words broke within him, upon each other, God: Death; so that the two were one. Death: Dead, the word prevailed; and before him, still beyond all other stillness, he saw as freshly as six years before his father's prostrate head and, through the efforts to hide it, the mortal blue dent in the impatient chin. He remembered within this instant how for the first time he had been convinced, and how eternally convincing it had been, when he saw how through that first full minute of looking his father had neither stirred nor spoken, and how the powerful right hand had lain half open against the exact center of his body; the cloth of his coat was not moved by any breathing and it was as if the hand were only a magically expert imitation of a hand, a hand of wax and, now looking again at the head, lips and a face of wax, a dent of wax, a head of wax immense upon this whole rich waxen air. Dead, the word came again, and shutting his eyes he prayed swiftly for his father the prayer of all his childhood, God bless daddy and keep him close to Thee and may light perpetual shine upon him, Amen; and casually, obliviously, as a trout into shadow, the image and memory vanished. It is Our Lord's death today, he said to himself, but at this moment he could see neither face, that of his father, or that of his Lord; only the words returned, God: Death.

No praying-benches were available at first, and they knelt where they entered, the waxed floor brutal against their bones. In the

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Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Richard whispered rapidly to himself, moving his lips and closing his eyes again. He crossed himself with care. There was a sound of arising and departure and through his eyelashes he saw Knox Peyton complete his genuflection and step ungainly between him and Jimmy, trying to subdue the reproach and annoyance in his face. They stayed where they knelt, all on their good manners before the one empty bench, and Richard heard the whispered "go on" several times before he realized that it was directed at him. Two worshipers glanced unhappily behind them, shut their eyes, and tucked their chins down, trying hard to pray. "I be damned if I will," Richard thought, and caught himself; he shut his eyes tightly and in despairing shame tucked his own chin down. "Go *on,*" he heard. He decided that he ought to make a penance of it. Trying to look and to feel neither humble nor proud he crossed himself, got up, genuflected, tiptoed to the empty bench, genuflected, knelt, and crossed himself. Mr. Bradford closed his eyes, frowned, and deeply bowed his head. Home stretch, Richard said to himself, and quickly begged forgiveness for an irreverence which had not been premeditated but spontaneous. But wasn't it even worse to be so unaware of where you were that such a thought could occur spontaneously? Mr. Bradford completed his devotions and tiptoed toward the door, his eyes downcast. His effort to stay within himself was too successful; Richard heard him bump against one of the two boys, and his whispered accusing apology, and their feckless and ill-subdued reply. Deaconess Spenser, at the desk opposite his own, compressed her lips, crossed herself, got up, genuflected, and stepped behind him; he could hear the harsh whispered reprimand whistling through her false teeth. He looked carefully at his clasped hands, but he heard movement as the door was cleared and along the side of his eye Jimmy advanced and swiftly established himself at the newly empty bench and the Deaconess, her wattles a violent red and her mouth pulled in tight, returned to her own bench, genuflected, knelt, crossed herself, and sank her forehead into her hands. Behind him somebody else stood up and he heard the knee touch the floor and, knowing he ought not to, glanced back; it was Hog Eye Kelsey, one of the littler boys from his own dormitory; already Hobe was standing to replace him. Not Hog Eye, he told himself; he can't help it: Jeff.

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Pay attention, he told himself. Mind your own business.

He looked at the veiled monstrance; the brightest threads of the veil sparkled like mica, gold-white on silver-white, and in one place a rigid shaft of metal radiance almost pierced the fabric. One azalea bloom strayed against it as if it were straining to be near it. Tiny threads sprang out of the flare of the blossom, the way small straight lines are drawn in a funny-paper to show music coming out of a horn. An apple-blossom fell. Looking at the tired sleepless flames of the candles, Richard felt as if he could almost hear them burning.

Soul of Christ sanctify me, he prayed silently; Body of Christ save me; but he was just saying it mechanically, and too fast. Slowly now, thinking carefully of each word, he began again.

Soul of Christ sanctify me: make me holy: absolve me from all spot of sin:

Body of Christ save me: save me: Thy Body which has already begun to suffer and die:

He braced his mind.

Blood of Christ inebriate me:

Carefully as he tried, he could not avoid it. Inebriate meant just plain drunken, or meant a drunken person, especially habitual drunkard, and as it was used here, it meant to make drunk, to intoxicate. And inebriety meant drunkenness and the habit of drunkenness. He had been fond of the word for a long time before he knew, or realized that he did not know, its meaning—which must of course be simply what the Blood of Christ might most naturally be expected to do: but what would that be, that sounded as nice as inebriate? During the past winter it had occurred to him to look it up in a dictionary. Since then the correct and disconcerting meanings had been indelible, and that part of the prayer had become thin ice. He could only get past it without irreverent or skeptical thoughts by saying it so fast or so shallowly that it was impossible to bear its meaning in mind, and that was no way to pray. He had asked Father Fish about it and Father Fish had shown him that it was possible to be amused by the word without feeling irreverent. He had said that some of these ancient prayers were rather extravagant in their way of putting things, and that there was no need to take them with absolute literalness. Although he had no way of being sure, Richard had a feeling that Father Fish had been as amused at him, as at the

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word; once again he wondered why, and stopped himself from wondering why because this was no time to. Don't take it literally, he told himself firmly; but the literal words remained and were even more firm: make drunk. Intoxicate. Good ole whiskey, he suddenly heard in his mind, and he remembered how, drinking sodapop in Knoxville, boys slightly more worldly than he would twist the bottle deep into the mouth and cock it up vertically to drink, and taking it down, breathless, would pat their stomachs or rub them in circles and gasp, "Ahhh, good ole whiskey!" But this wasn't even on whiskey. On blood. Jesus' blood, too. His uncle had once sneered, "There is a pudding filled with blood," scornfully exploding the first syllable of "pudding," and Richard had been both shocked and amused, and he was shocked to find that he remembered it with amusement now. Forgive us our trespasses, he whispered, shutting his eyes tight. It was only a hymn, and so it was not as bad to make fun of as some things were. But the blood was "drawn from Emmanuel's veins," so that did make it pretty awful. And his uncle had said it with a kind of hatred which included much more than the hymn: all of religion, and everybody who was religious, even his own sister, Richard's mother, and his Aunt Patty, and him, Richard, and his own sister. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, he prayed, and pushed the matter out of his mind. He does like us all the same, he reflected, same as grandpa does. They just don't like the Church.

Passion of Ch——

Water from the side of Christ wash me; and he felt that his thoughts badly needed washing:

Passion of Christ strengthen me:

Within Thy Wounds hide me, he thought swiftly and with great uneasiness, hugging the ground and the leaf coverage as if beneath the skimming of a bird of prey: but try as he could, the image plunged and took him. An older boy, the only one Richard knew who also liked to read, had with great sophistication and delight explained to him what was meant, in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis,* by the words *he saw more wounds than one,* and this had instantly become identical in his mind with a rawly intimate glimpse he had had, three or four years before, of Minnielee Henley when they were climbing a tree; and now with these words *within Thy*

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Wounds hide me the image fought in his mind with the image of those small but deadly wounds in the body of Jesus, in which surely nobody could hide, not even the one the spear made in His side. But not there either, he insisted to himself; not even if He wasn't a man. Yet there in his mind's eye, made all the worse by all the most insipid and effeminate, simpering faces of Jesus that he had ever seen in pictures, was the hideous image of a huge torn bleeding gulf at the supine crotch, into which an ant-swarm of the pious, millions of them, all pleading and rolling up their eyes, laden souls, by thousands meekly stealing, struggled to crowd themselves, and lose themselves, and drown, and dissolve.

It was the Devil, that was all. Just the Devil Himself, tempting him.

O good Jesu hear me, he prayed with deep self-loathing, almost aloud: and realized with gratitude that for once he had been able to say these words, which for months now had seemed to him fulsome and insincere, with complete desire and sincerity. You just have to mean it, he thought, for it to mean anything.

Suffer me not to be separated from Thee (a mortal sin is a sin that cuts us off from God):

From the Malicious Enemy defend me:

Of these closing lines he never felt doubt and now he repeated, with reverent emphasis and relish:

From the Malicious Enemy defend me:

In the hour of my death call me and bid me come to Thee:

That with Thy

No there was something really wrong about

He prayed, with fear and determination: That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee, forever and ever, Amen.

All the same it was wrong for people to ask to be saints, as flat as all that. Or even just to be *with* the saints, if that was what it meant. To just barely manage through God's infinite mercy to escape burning eternally in the everlasting fires of Hell ought to be just about as much as any good Catholic could pray for; and now Richard remembered still another prayer at which, when he was serving at Mass, he had for quite a while now been accustomed to keep silence or at most to make approximate sounds of the words, with his fingers crossed: where, in the General Confession, reviewing

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his iniquities, the penitent cries, "The remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable." As a rule he was able to say "the remembrance of them is grievous unto us" with adequate sincerity; but it was seldom that he could feel, at the particular moment he felt required to feel, that "the burden of them is intolerable." It wasn't anywhere near intolerable, no matter how much it ought to be. At first he had been able to say it in the realization that it was intolerable to his soul, whether or not he in his mind and feelings was capable of feeling it just then, and that prayers are said by and for the soul, not the mind or the feelings; but in this he came to feel that he was mistaken: for it was, he noticed, only when he believed and felt deeply with his mind or his emotions that he was able to be aware that his soul, as such, existed. But that isn't true, he now thought with alarm. No matter what I think or feel, the soul is always there and always alive unless it has been killed by impenitence for mortal sin. The hardening of the heart toward God. I'm only trying to suit myself, he told himself; not my soul, and not God.

But how can you say things when you only ought to mean them and don't really mean them at all?

Have mercy upon us O God have mercy upon us, he found himself praying. These were the words of the Confession which followed "the burden of them is intolerable," and always, as now, he was able to mean them when he spoke them.

But not "that with Thy Saints I may praise Thee."

Now it occurred to Richard that perhaps this prayer had been written by a saint or by someone near sainthood, who was able to mean every extreme thing that was said; and he knew that anyone who could fully mean those things, and who could mean them every time they were said, was to be humbly respected. But in that case it was a prayer which was good only for saints and near saints to say, not for ordinary people, no matter how good they hoped to be. Nobody's got any business even hoping he can be a saint, he told himself.

God no! he exclaimed to himself, for now suddenly it became vivid and shameful in his memory that he himself had for a while cherished, more secretly even than his lust, exactly this inordinate

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ambition. Good golly! he whispered within his soul, feeling the back of his neck and then his cheeks go hot; and with a cold and marveling, compassionate contempt for the child he had so recently been, he lost himself in reflective remembrance, unaware that it was for the first time in his life.

It was hardly more than a year ago, when he was only eleven, that the image and meaning of Jesus and the power and meaning of the Sacraments and of the teachings of the Church, all embodied and set forth in formalities of language and of motion whose sober beauties were unique, and in music which at that time moved and satisfied him as no other music could, had first and, it had seemed, irreducibly, established upon all his heart and mind their quality, their comfort, their nobility, their sad and soaring weight; and, entering upon his desolation of loneliness, had made of suffering a springing garden, an Eden in which to walk, enjoying the cool of the evening. It had become a secret kind of good to be punished, especially if the punishment was exorbitant or unjust; better to be ignored by others, than accepted; better still to be humiliated, than ignored. He remembered how on mornings when he had waked up and found his bed dry, he had felt as much regret as relief. He had begun to take care to read in conspicuous places, where he would be most liable to interruption and contempt. He had pretended not to know lessons he had in fact prepared, in order that even such teachers as thought well of him, or thought "at least he's smart," or "he studies, anyway," might think ill of him. He had continued his solitary wanderings in the woods until it occurred to him that these excursions, for all their solitude and melancholy, were more pleasant than unpleasant; from then on he had put himself into the middle of crowds, especially on the drearier afternoons when even the hardiest boys stayed indoors and the restive, vindictive, bored, mob feelings were at their most sullen and light-triggered. The leaden melodies of the Lenten hymns had appealed to him as never before; lines in certain hymns seemed, during that time, to have been written especially for him. *Jesus, I my Cross have taken,* he would sing, already anticipating the lonely solace of tears concealed in public: *all to leave and follow Thee; destitute, despis'd, forsaken,* were words especially dear to him; *Thou from hence my All shalt be.* As he sang that he felt: nobody else wants me; and did his best to believe it, even of his mother. He

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remembered now that this kind of singing had satisfied him most at Stations of the Cross, on cold rainy nights. *Perish ev'ry fond ambition,* he would sing magnanimously; (no I *won't* become a naturalist; I'll never explore the source of the Amazon; I'll never even own a monkey, or be junior tennis champion); *all I've thought or hoped or known;* then tears and their subdual rewarded him: *Yet how rich is my condition* (never to live at home again, never to be loved or even liked), *God and Heaven are still my own;* and he saw crowned God and Heaven shining and felt, in a humble kind of way, that he literally owned them.

Now remembering it he shook his head almost as if in disbelief, but he knew it had been so. Everything. He had done just about everything he could think of. He had gone seldom to Father Fish's cottage, for friendliness was certain there, and often cookies and cocoa too, and he had found that these luxuries meant most to him, in his desire to suffer for religious advantage, only when they were indulged so rarely that even while they were being enjoyed they enhanced the bleakness of the rest of living. He even schemed to intensify his homesickness to the utmost possible, asking permission of the Master of the Day the more often, that it be the more curtly or impatiently or, at best, contemptuously refused; watching his mother's cottage, the one place he was almost never allowed to go, sometimes by the hour; sometimes in ambush under dripping trees, relishing the fact that only he knew of the miserableness of that watch; sometimes openly, hanging against the fence, relishing the fact that she knew, and others could see, and that even though she knew, she would try to ignore him and stay out of his sight, and that when at last she could ignore him no longer, she would hurt him by trying to be stern with him as she told him to go away, and would sharpen his unhappiness into agony by her idea of a sensible explanation why this senseless cruelty had to be law.

"Because dear, mother thinks it's best for you not to be too near her, all the more because you miss her so much." "Because your father—isn't with us." "Because mother thinks you need to be among other boys Richard. In charge of men." And worst of all: "I know how hard it is now but I know that when you're older you'll understand why I did it, and thank me for it." *Thank her!* his heart sneered now, in bitter paroxysm. And for a moment so brief that the

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realization did not stay with him, he felt hatred and contempt for his mother, for her belief in submissiveness and for her telling him, on certain infuriating occasions, that it is only through submitting bravely and cheerfully to unhappiness that we can learn God's Will, and how most truly to be good. God's Will, he thought now: I bet it isn't just for people to be unhappy! Who wants to be *good! I* do, he answered himself. But not like that. I sure was crazy then, he thought, pleased that he was now able to recognize the fact. Just a crazy fool. The whole crazy thing had begun to fade away soon after Easter, with the good weather, and had vanished so completely during the free summer in Knoxville that he had forgotten the whole of it until just now: but all through that dreary winter and increasingly throughout that drizzling season of penitence, he realized now with incredulous and amused self-scorn, he had ever more miserly cherished and elaborated his wretchedness in every one of its sorry ramifications, as indispensable to the secret, the solution, he had through God's Grace discovered; and had managed easily to forgive himself those parts of his Lenten Rule which he meekly enjoyed in public, by inventing still other, harder rules which were private.

His mother had tried uneasily to suggest to him that there might be a kind of vanity mixed up in his extreme piety—"not that you *mean* it, of course, dear"—against which he must be on his guard; but remembering the role of dismayed parents and scornful villagers in the early lives of many of the saints, he had answered her gently and patiently, with forbearance, that was the word, as befitted communication between creatures of two worlds so unbridgeably different. He had been tempted on more than one occasion to say to her, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come"; but he had suspected that this might be thought impudent or absurd or even blasphemous. Nor had he ever said aloud, when others jeered or tormented, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; but had often fortified himself with the silent words, "And He held His peace."

It had only gradually been borne upon him that he himself might aspire to actual sainthood; he had quickly realized that if that was to be his goal it was necessary, starting young, he might already be too late, to perform in private for God's eyes alone and in public that others might see, and be edified, and remember, and

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revere him, a long and consistent series of remarkable spiritual feats. Let your lights so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, Which is in Heaven. But meditating what these might be, he had realized that there in truth he did run the danger of sinning through Pride, as those people do who look hungry when they fast; whereas his own ambitions were prompted (or so it seemed) by true religious feeling and by nothing else. These ambitions had crystallized during the late weeks of Lent, into a desire to do for Jesus as much as Jesus was doing for him and for all souls. He had experimented with extra fasting, but it was not possible to carry this far, since it was virtually impossible to be excused from meals without the sin of lying, and almost as difficult, he found, to sit at the table without eating, or eating little enough to give the fast any dignity or meaning. So he had chosen self-mortification instead. He had gone into the woods and eaten worms, but this had disgusted him, and he had been even worse disgusted when, on one occasion, he had come near tasting his own excrement. It had suddenly struck him as very doubtful indeed that Jesus would ever have done any such thing, and he had thrown the twig deep into the bushes and had carefully buried the filth. Efforts to scourge himself had been moderately painful but not sufficiently effective to outweigh the sense of bashfulness, even of ridiculousness, which he felt over the clumsiness of the attempt, in relation to the severity of the intention. So he had been reduced, mainly, to keeping very bitter vigil over his thoughts and his language and over his sensuous actions upon himself, and to finding out times and places in which it would be possible to kneel, for much longer than it was comfortable to kneel, without danger of getting caught at it. (He had been as frightened, once, by such an interruption, as if he had been surprised in a sexual act.)

It was during one of these protracted and uncomfortable sojourns on his knees that his mind, uneasily strained between its own wanderings and efforts at disciplined meditation, had become absorbed in grateful and overwhelmed imagination of Christ Crucified, and had without warning brought to its surface the possibility of his own crucifixion. He had been wondering with all of a sincere heart how ever he might do enough for the Son of God Who had done so much for him when suddenly, supplanting Christ's image, he saw

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his own body nailed to the Cross and, in the same image, himself looked down from the Cross and felt his weight upon the nails, and the splintered wood against the whole length of his scourged back; and stoically, with infinite love and forgiveness, gazed downward into the eyes of Richard, and of Roman soldiers, and of jeering Jews, and of many people whom Richard had known. It was a solemn and rewarding moment; but almost within the next breath he recognized that he had no such cause or right as Jesus to die upon the Cross: and turning his head, saw Christ's head higher beside his own and a third head, lower, cursing; and knew that he was, instead, the Penitent Thief.

But it was of course out of the question that in a deep country part of Middle Tennessee, in nineteen twenty-three, he could actually manage to have himself nailed to a Cross; and although (if he should have the courage) he could undoubtedly nail his own feet, and even one hand (if someone else would steady the nail), his right hand would still hang free, and it would look pretty foolish beside a real Crucifixion. With any proper humility he would be content merely to be tied up, as the thieves usually were, and to hang during the three hours of Good Friday that Jesus hung on the Cross. Even that would mean a good deal, if only in token; the widow's mite, only it seemed rather more than the widow had managed; and he realized that many others besides himself would be moved, and impressed, and very likely improved, by the good example. It would be impossible of course to get a Cross without removing the image of Jesus from it, that big life-size one out in the vestibule, and that would be irreverent even if it were allowed. Or someone might make one for him but he doubted it. He might make one for himself if he could sneak into Manual Training Shop and get enough private time, only everybody knew he wasn't any good with his hands and simple as a Cross must be to make, they would just laugh at any that he would be likely to make. One of the school's gridiron bedsteads would be convenient for tying to, and very likely even more uncomfortable to hang against than a Cross, but he was forced to doubt, as with the nail-holding and the Cross, that he could manage the whole tying-up by himself, and as he thought of asking someone else to help him, he felt extraordinarily shy. As he singled over each of the few whom in any degree he trusted, or on whose

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affection he could at all depend, he became sure that there was not one who would co-operate in this, or even really understand about it. It would be necessary instead to anger and deceive people he disliked into doing it: but that, he felt, was both unlikely and sinful. If he got them mad they would do what they wanted to him, not what he wanted them to do, and he could not imagine how to suggest to them that the one thing he didn't want was to be stripped of his garments (except for a loincloth) and tied to a bedstead for three hours. And even if he should manage to, he would be tricking them into a sin, and that would be a sin of itself. It was easier just to imagine it as something already done, and as soon as he forgot about the problems of getting it done it was better, too.

There he hung, the iron bars and edged slats of the bed acutely painful against flesh and bone alike; but he made no complaint. Rather, his eyes were fixed steadfastly upon the expiring eyes of his crucified Lord, and his own suffering was as naught. There was a steady murmuring of scorn, pity, regard and amazement beneath him, and now and again a familiar face and voice was lifted, pleading with him or commanding him to come down. Father McPhetridge, the Prior; his wide red face reared up and told him that this was the most outrageous thing that had ever been done by a boy in this School and that he was to stop it immediately and come down and take his punishment like a man. He replied, gently and calmly, his voice all the more effective because of its quietness after all that indignant roaring, that "punishment" (he smiled at the word in his suffering) would have to come at its own good time; he would descend (with their help) promptly at three o'clock and not before; and would give himself up to his punishers without making a struggle. Scourge me, he said; paddle me with the one with holes in it; put me on bounds all the rest of the year; expel me even; there is nothing you can do that won't be to the greater glory of God and so I forgive you. The Prior, abashed, withdrew; Richard saw his whispering among the other monks and the teachers and his face was redder than ever, and their whispering eyes were on him. The football coach Braden Bennett, who had so often sneered at his music lessons; his face was changed, now: though with a scornful wonder, men see her sore oppressed. He looked straight back into those bullying eyes, with such quiet fortitude and forgiveness that the scorn and the

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wonder deepened, the wonder even more than the scorn. His mother pled with him to come down; she was even crying; and he was awfully sorry for her; but he shook his head slowly and, smiling gently, told her: "No, Mother, I deeply repent for making you cry, and feel so bad, but mine hour is not yet come." She collapsed with sobbing and the women of the place crowded around her; they took her arms and helped her as she walked away, all bent over. Some day you'll understand, he told her within himself, and you'll thank me for it; and he knew the happiness that comes only of returning evil with good. Willard Rivenburg's deep dark jaw hung open and Richard could overhear his whisper, to Bennett, "Jesus that kid's got guts." George Fitzgerald, scarcely able to contain his tears, held up a sponge soaked in vinegar, which Richard forgivingly refused; and Hobe Gillum and Jimmy Toole and Parmo Gallatin and Keg Head Hodges and the others looked at him, glum but respectful; even if it was no more than politeness, he realized, he would never be last again, when they chose up sides. Through the half-open Chapel door he could still hear the voice of the Three Hour Sermon, Father Ogle's voice, and he realized that the service had no more than an hour, at the outside, to go; but the voice sounded half-hearted and sailed hollowly around the almost empty Church; nearly everyone in the community was gathered here in the vestibule, and there were some even from nearby towns, and suddenly a photographer climbed on the sandstone font and aimed at him and flashed a bulb. STRANGE RITES AT MOUNTAIN SCHOOL, he read: and, as blood broke scalding upon his nape, sank his face into his hands and prayed, in despair, *O God forgive me! forgive me if you can stand to!*

For, musing upon his past vanities with affectionate scorn or even as with a scornful wonder, the scorn, the living vanity, of one who has put away childish things, and dwelling upon them in remembrance, he had dwelt once more within them (within Thy Wounds hide me), ensnaring himself afresh. For these later imaginations were not wholly remembrance; some were newly his, and only now, even in the very hour of Christ's own passion, he had yet again seduced his soul. If others, if any other in the world, should know those absurd imaginations of his heart: by his dread and horror in the

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mere thought, he knew his contemptible silliness. But God of course knew, and Christ Himself, even now when the Son was suffering and the Father, grieving that He might not take the Cup from Him, was hovering in love and sorrow, yes, engulfed, enchanted in woe though they were, They knew very clearly though, it now occurred to him, his secret was safe with Them. In insupportable self-loathing he squeezed his eyes so tightly shut that they ached, and dug his chin as tightly against his throat as it would lock and in blind vertigo, scarcely knowing his action, struck himself heavily upon his breastbone, groaning within his soul, *the burden of them is intolerable.* With the second blow he realized, in gratitude and in a new flowering of vainglory, that he had been surprised into contrition so true and so deep that beside it every moment of contrition he had ever known before seemed trivial, even false, and for an instant he questioned the validity of every Absolution he had ever been granted. Yet almost before this question could take form, and even while his fist was preparing its third assault against his inordinate heart, this new doubt was supplanted by a recognition that his action was conspicuous and that it must seem to others as affected, as much put on for outward show, as he himself, observing others, had come to feel that various mannerisms in prayer must be. Bringing his fist against his breast in circumspection he opened his eyes, raised his head a little, and without turning his head, glanced narrowly around him through his eyelashes.

Nobody seemed to have noticed anything out of the ordinary although he could not, of course, be sure of those who knelt behind him. He bowed his head again, twisting it a little to the right, lowered his right shoulder and drew it back a little, and observed from nearly closed eyes, He still could not see those who knelt directly behind him but so far as he could see, nobody seemed to have noticed him; then he caught Hobe Gillum's coppery eye, and blushed. He readjusted his head and shoulder and watched Claude Gray, who knelt a little ahead of him and to the right. Claude's head was flung far back and was so twisted in adoration that the point of his left jaw, bright gold in the candlelight, was the most conspicuous and almost the highest part of it. What was more, it was clear that he was praying, not to the Blessed Sacrament, but to the small, shrouded statue of the Blessed Virgin above the lavabo table; and noticing

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now for the first time that a little cup of violets stood on the plaster ledge at her feet, Richard was sure who had searched them out among the wet dead leaves to honor that place. He looked at Claude again, particularly at the tilted curly back of the head and at the abandoned angle of the brightened jaw, and thought, He may really mean it, he may not even know it but I bet he does, I bet he knows it makes a picture and I bet he got it from some picture of some saint or other. But if he did really mean it, and no longer knew he was doing it, then it was not fair to blame him.

He was probably thinking about his mother. It seemed a long time ago he had lost his mother to keep on making so much fuss about it but maybe he took things harder than most people. Richard suddenly felt deeply ashamed of himself in case Claude really was grieving and praying for his dead mother, and he began to feel pity for her and for Claude as well, but then he remembered Claude's voice, which sounded more girlish than a girl's even though it had changed, reciting to him the Litany of the Blessed Virgin in impassioned sugary tones; O most clement O most holy O most sweet Virgin Mary; something of that sort and a lot more besides. He had felt uneasy about the whole thing and at the instant that Claude brought such juicy emphasis to the words *mosst sweeett,* with such meticulousness about both t's, and pronouncing *most* like *moused,* Richard had decided that he definitely disliked the whole prayer; and looking at Claude now, he disliked it even more thoroughly, and he decided that even if Claude was genuine now in his praying, he did not trust that kind of praying. He remembered his mother's gossiping about Claude once, his desire that the School should put lace borders on the cottas and his special attentions to the Blessed Virgin, and saying impatiently, "Well what I can't see is, why doesn't he just—go on over to Rome!"

But now remembering the scorn and impatience which had been in her voice, and still watching Claude, with the long hair of the back of his head like a shabby chrysanthemum, tilted about the weak neck, he felt that Claude was pitiful, and that it was careless and cruel to think of him contemptuously, and as shameful to be watching him in this way, so unaware that he was being watched, or that he might look in the least silly, so defenseless, as it would be to peer at him through a keyhole. How do *I* know, he thought; he's

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probably praying all right, and even if he isn't I've got no right to look at him like this and——

With this, something he could not quite remember, which seemed to be prodding at the edges of his thought, came abruptly clear. He remembered that he had started looking at Claude, and speculating with mistrust about the quality of his praying, because he himself had done something, without affectation, which might easily be misunderstood to be affected. He could not quite understand it but he was in some ignoble way trying to put off onto Claude something that was wrong with himself, or even worse, was assuming that Claude was doing wrongly what he knew he himself had not done wrongly; and worse even than that, he had so wandered and so lost himself in speculating about the weakness of another that he had degraded and lost his own moment of contrition, and had forgotten the very sin for which he was contrite, in committing still another sin of much the same kind. But now, although he could see the first sin, and the moment of contrition, and the second sin, quite clearly, they formed something more like a picture than a feeling, and there were too many things in the picture for him to look at any one of them really closely. He felt shame and a sort of astonishment. He wondered whether he would ever learn, from committing one sin, how not to commit another of the same sort even in the very moment of repenting it; and he felt that it was strange, and terrible, that repentance so deep and real as he knew that his had been, could be so fleeting. He felt deeply sorry and was filled with self-dislike as he saw what he had done, but he knew that the feeling was of a much shallower kind than that in which, without foreseeing it, he had struck his breast so hard. He thought of Jesus suffering on the Cross, but the deep and truest contrition was not restored; he looked again at Claude's unpromising head, and felt a mysterious sadness, which he could not quite understand, for whatever was imperfect and incompetent: Claude; poor little Dillon Prince, with his square-bobbed tow hair and his pink lashless eyes, forever crying or just over crying or just about to cry; a hen, with a wry neck which could never be straightened, standing as if shyly to herself in one corner of the chicken run, with one wing hunched; his own imperfect and incontinent mind and spirit; and again of Jesus upon the Cross, suffering and dying that all such imperfections might be made whole,

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yes, even the poor darn hen; and tears came into his eyes, which he relished, but he knew they had nothing to do with the deep contrition he was trying to recapture. Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, he whispered almost aloud, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, draw near with faith and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.

His heart opened. Almighty and everlasting God, he prayed, Maker of all things, Judge of all men (and he saw as in a wheeling rondure the shining of all things, the shadows of all men), we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickednesses (and they manifolded themselves upon the air between earth and heaven like falling leaves and falling snow) which we from time to time (and over and over, morning and noon and waking in the night) most grievously have committed in thought (the wandering mind, the lascivious image which even now flashed before him), word (the words of obscenity and of cursing) and deed (the shame and the violence of the hands) against Thy Divine Majesty (flung upward like so many arrows and so much filth against the dying Son upon His Cross and the invincible Father upon His Throne), provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us (he bowed his head deeply, with eyes closed, and the entire sky hardened into one spear driving downwards upon his bowed neck, yet Christ upon His Cross merely looked into his eyes without either wrath or indignation). We are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. The remembrance of them is grievous unto us (O yes it is surely grievous), the burden of them is (God, forgive me, forgive me, make them intolerable, intolerable), the burden of them is intolerable (it is, Lord, Lord God I want it to be), is intolerable, Have mercy upon us most merciful Father have mercy upon us (and he pressed his clasped hands tightly against his forehead), for Thy Son Our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past (is past), and grant that we may ever hereafter serve Thee and please Thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of Thy Name, Amen.

That we may ever hereafter. Ever hereafter. Serve Thee and please Thee. Serve Thee and please Thee in newness of life. Forgive us all that is past. All. Past. Ever hereafter, in newness of life. Serve Thee, and please Thee. To the honor and glory of Thy Name.

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He was as peaceful and light almost, as if he had just received Absolution. Keeping his eyes thinly closed, tilting his head quietly back, he could see the tender light of the candles against his eyelids, and he became aware once again of the strong fragrance of all the flowers. Dying, he whispered to himself. Soon now. For me and for all sinners. O sacred Head. He heard on his rose-mild blindness the infinitesimal flickering of the clock like those tiniest of thorns which cannot be taken out of the skin by thousands, by crown of piercing thorn. Opening his eyes just enough to see, looking through their rainbow flickering of little sharpness, sharp flames on the dark, thorn flames in thousands, each a thorn, a little sword, a tongue of fire, standing from pentecostal waxen foreheads; go ye unto all the world, a briar-patch of blessed fires, burning, just audibly crackling; no; the clock. Now pale flowers, round, in thousands, stared flatly among the thousands of sharp flames, as white and lonely on the humming gloom as organstops, gazed at too fixedly during a stupefying sermon, round and bright as wafers, consecrated Hosts, in the tiny burning and prickling of Time. He did not quite conceive of Time except as a power of measure upon the darkness, yet opened his eyes now and saw that it was almost twenty-five, twenty-three and a half, past four. The clock stood on the lowest step of the Altar. Its leather case was inlaid with silver wire almost as fine as hair, which outlined intricate flowers and leaves. It was his mother's, and it had been borrowed for use in the Lady Chapel, as it always was for this Thursday watch, because it was the most nearly silent clock on the place. Now that he looked at it he heard it the more clearly, a sound more avid and delicate than that of a kitten at its saucer, and now that he heard nothing else he saw nothing else except the face of the clock, hard, handless, staring white out of a shadow of trembling gold, like the great Host in a monstrance; and when once again he saw the hands, and the numbers, they showed that only two minutes of his watch remained. Could ye not watch with me one hour? Now he remembered the images and emotions into which he had awakened, so acutely, that they were almost his again; but now in some way they had hardened, they stayed at some distance from him, and he began to realize that during this entire half-hour his mind had been wandering: there had been scarcely one moment of prayer or of realization. Hell of a saint I'd make, he said to himself; and

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added with cold and level weary self-disgust to the tally of the sins he must soon confess, I swore in Lady Chapel in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. God be merciful unto me a sinner, he whispered in his mind, crossing himself.

Now for the first time he realized that his knees were very sore. The small of his back ached. When he moved, bending his back, shifting his knees, everything whirled hazily for a moment, then, with a kind of sliding or shunting like the falling into plumb of a weighted curtain, came clear and stayed still. I guess that was nearly fainting, he thought, with satisfaction. He searched the deep grooves in his knees along the edge of the board and re-established them exactly as they had been, and bore down on them to make them hurt the more, and he found that it hurt still more to keep his back completely straight and still, than to move it at all. The pain made him feel strong and reverent, and smiling he whispered silently to Jesus, "It's nothing to what You're doing." Our Father who art in Heaven, he began; he knew now that he would stay another watch through.

Now it was half past four, but nobody moved. Nobody wants to be the first, he thought. No they're all praying, he told himself. I'm the only one noticed what time it is. Behind him he heard a sound of stealthy entering and of knees coming quietly to the floor. Now somebody will give up their place, he thought. It ought to be me.

Claude tilted his head to the other side and now Richard noticed the translucent lavender beads in his hands. He heard somebody stir and stand wearily up and he knew by the rustling starch that it was the Deaconess. She was in when I came. Been an hour. Maybe more. Quit keeping tabs, he told himself sharply. None of your business. There was the sound of her going away and the sound of another entering. Pray, he told himself. I ought to give my place. It was nearly thirty-three minutes after. We beseech Thee O Lord pour Thy Grace into our hearts, that——

The sacristy door opened and there was Lee Allen. He looked more grave and tired than before and he avoided Richard's eyes with an aloofness which abashed him. That as we have known the Incarna-

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Martin Turnell

THE WRITER AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

If we made a rough list of the principal European writers of the last three hundred years, we should find that the vast majority of them belonged to what are loosely called the middle classes. The list would include a few aristocrats like the Duc de La Rochefoucauld and the Duc de Saint-Simon and a few writers of proletarian origin like John Bunyan or D. H. Lawrence; but they are exceptions and represent only a tiny minority. Since this is so, it seems at first surprising that many writers should have spoken so ill of the class from which they came, should have been so bitter in their denunciation of the "bourgeois." Now the use of the expression "bourgeois" as a term of abuse was not the invention of Karl Marx or of the nineteenth-century anarchists. It is much older and, I feel tempted to add, much more respectable. In 1666 the French novelist, Antoine Furetière, published a work called *Le Roman bourgeois* which was a satirical picture of middle-class manners in the seventeenth century. Three years later Molière's comedy, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme,* was played before Louis XIV at the château of Chambord. Nor was this quite the beginning of the story. The bourgeois had been a stock figure of fun in the old French and Italian farces and it was from this source that Molière took his *bourgeois gentilhomme.*

Le Bourgeois gentilhomme is not of course among Molière's supreme achievements. It was written for the purpose of light entertainment; and it is in his other works like *l'Ecole des femmes, Tartuffe* and the *Misanthrope* that we must look for his most radical criticisms of contemporary society. I shall suggest that the whole of his work was an onslaught on the bourgeoisie, but before doing so I want to look at the position of the middle classes in the seventeenth century.

They were, as their name suggests, a fluctuating body and we can detect three main groups. There was an upper stratum which

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tended to rise out of their class, to intermarry with the aristocracy or like the writers to move in court circles by virtue of their calling. At the other end of the scale were the provincials who were drifting toward the peasantry and who, living dim, ignorant and impoverished on their farms, were the constant butt of seventeenth-century wit. In between these two extremes came the bourgeoisie proper—the doctors, lawyers and merchants. They were prosperous, pious and respectable, and in spite of heavy attacks from the writers they were probably the most stable element in society.

Now though there are some grounds for identifying this middle stratum with the bourgeois of the novelists and playwrights, the identification cannot be absolute. The concept is not merely social; it is also moral. "When one has the good fortune to belong to a high rank," remarks a character in Molière's *Amphitryon,* "everything one does is fine and good." I think we can assume that the dramatist thoroughly endorsed this proposition. What he admired was *les grands,* was a certain aristocratic style of life. And the people whom he admired were not less great because they spent their lives at the Court instead of on the battlefield. Compared with *les grands,* the bourgeois represents (as a recent critic puts it) "a form of existence which is morally inferior and which is incapable of realizing *le beau caractère humain.*"[1] Looked at from this point of view, the whole of Molière's work is seen to be an attack on the middle-class way of life—particularly on its respectability. *L'Ecole des femmes* is an attack on the bourgeois conception of marriage; *Tartuffe* on its stuffy piety; *l'Avare* on a thriftiness which has turned into miserliness; the *Femmes savantes* on its intellectual pretensions. *Don Juan* certainly pillories the aristocratic free-thinkers of the day, but this does not prevent Molière from showing his bourgeois enemies in an excessively unfavorable light.

This attack on middle-class respectability, lack of adventurousness and, more important still, lack of real culture has led Molière's critics to describe his plays as subversive. There is certainly something in it. For we detect from time to time in his work a note of exasperation; and this exasperation probably led him to go further than he intended and developed into an apology not merely for the aristocratic style of life, but for a certain aristocratic licentiousness.

1. Paul Bénichou, *Morales du grand siècle,* Paris, 1948, p. 180.

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So much for the writer's outlook. I want to turn next to his actual position in seventeenth-century society. In a short play called *La Critique de l'école des femmes,* which Molière wrote as a reply to his critics, the character who represents the dramatist himself uses these words:

> The great test of all your comedies is the judgment of the Court. It is the taste of the Court that you must study if you want to discover the art of success. There is no place where opinions are so just; and without bringing in all the learned people who are there, through natural, simple good sense and mixing with the whole of the elegant world, there is created there an attitude of mind which, without comparison, judges things with more penetration than all the rusty learning of the pedants.

Now this was not idle flattery. There is no doubt that the Court of Louis XIV did represent an intellectual élite and that it did provide the writer with his audience. He lived by pleasing, and those whom he needed to please were first and foremost the people whom the King gathered round him.

How in fact did the writer live in the seventeenth century? The answer is that he lived by patronage. There were two forms of patronage—the private patron and the King.

The aristocrats were well pleased to have a few men of letters in their train and to pay for their services. When a dramatist published one of his plays it was generally prefaced by a fulsome eulogy addressed to one of the great; and the author was suitably recompensed. Some of the great were naturally more generous than others, and the writers soon found out who paid best for their dedications. One ingenious man made a practice of dedicating each edition of his books to a fresh patron simply by changing the name at the beginning of the dedication and drawing a further reward for his pains from the new patron.

I think that this suggests already the sort of relations which existed between what may be called the blood aristocracy and the intellectual aristocracy. The nobility paid the writer for his services, sometimes found a sinecure for him and for his literary friends in their households, but they also kept him strictly in his place. A writer who published a satire on a nobleman knew what to expect. A posse of the noble lord's servants would seek him out and administer a sound thrashing. Sometimes the victim would act himself. It is reported

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that one nobleman, who considered that he had been libeled by Molière, accosted the dramatist in a public place, caught hold of his head and rubbed his face violently against the metal buttons of his coat, repeating the gibes which had offended him in the play. The importance of the writer's function was fully recognized; he moved in high circles; but the division between him and the man of noble birth was absolute.

I turn now to what may be called state patronage. Handsome pensions had been given to men of letters under Louis XIII and during the Regency, but it was not until Louis XIV actually took possession of his throne in 1661 that an attempt was made to organize patronage on a substantial scale. Colbert at once enlisted the services of Chapelain, who was considered the greatest poet of the day, and invited him to prepare a suitable list of writers who were to be recommended for a pension. The list was duly prepared and the different writers endowed in accordance with their standing. They were expected to work for their money and one of Chapelain's most important duties—a duty which was zealously executed—was to go round and prod those authors whose stubborn muses failed to produce an ode of thanksgiving with sufficient promptness or who failed to commemorate royal births, deaths or convalescences. Those who still failed to deliver the goods or whose goods were not considered to be up to the necessary standard had the chagrin of discovering that their names were missing from the next year's list. On the other hand, those who like Racine grew in stature discovered—no doubt with gratitude—that the amount of their pensions kept pace with their literary progress. There were also other ways of rewarding the very great writers. Molière—always a favorite with Louis XIV—received a *gratification* every time one of his plays was performed before the King; and Racine and Boileau were made royal historiographers whose duty was to follow the armies and record the military victories of the Roi Soleil.

Unfortunately for the writers, the system of pensions was not quite as satisfactory in practice as it was in theory. There were delays in making payment and there were distressing discrepancies between the figures shown in the published list and the sums which they actually "touched." When the scheme was inaugurated, the pension was handed to the happy writer in a silk purse, but that did not last long.

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Instructions were issued that the recipients must call and collect their pensions from the King's paymaster.

The system lasted from 1663—the year in which Chapelain's first list was made public—until 1690. It reached its peak in 1671. After that, the sums allocated to the purpose began to decline as Louis found other ways of spending his money—notably on the construction of the Palace of Versailles. In 1690 the whole scheme was jettisoned and deserving writers were privately rewarded.

What conclusions emerge? In the first place, the writers have already begun to form a class apart. They are decidedly hostile to that section of society into which they were born and like Molière do not hesitate to deliver violent attacks on it when the occasion arises. There is as yet nothing that can be called a genuine *déclassement*. The nobility refuse to admit for a moment that the writer or the artist is on the same social level as themselves; and though they find a place for him in their households, that place is essentially the position of a servant.

In the second place, the system of royal pensions can be said to consecrate the position of the writer in society, to stamp him as a useful and, indeed, an important member of the community. Now it must be emphasized that the system was in no sense charitable and that though Louis was a cultivated man, this alone would not have induced him to pay out substantial sums to writers. There was a solid business side to the transaction. The King and his ministers realized that the endowment of writers was very good publicity and contributed to the glory of the reign. Their function was perfectly clear. They were of course expected to introduce flattering references to His Majesty in their writings, and they did so; but—and this is the best side of the picture—they also performed this function simply by being very good writers, and the steadiness with which Racine's pension increased as his genius developed is highly creditable to everybody concerned.

In view of what I shall have to say about the nineteenth century, I want to emphasize particularly that in the main the writer was at one and not at odds with society. When, in the final scene of *Tartuffe*, Molière makes one of his characters say: *"Nous vivons sous un prince ennemi de la fraude,"* he meant what he said, and it seems to me that the whole of the play is behind this single line. Molière believed that

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in spite of abuses, which he did not hesitate to criticize, the order was in the main a sound one, and that the King was indeed the pivot of the whole grandiose and complicated structure. The abuses and scandals were seen in perspective and treated as flaws in an otherwise stable order. It is true that Racine had some stinging things to say about the dangers of absolute monarchy, that when we read him today we detect signs of the coming collapse and that La Bruyère had some pungent observations to make about the deplorable condition of the peasantry; but their criticisms were indirect and probably anything but obvious to contemporary audiences and readers. The prevailing impression is that the writer was a powerful support to the existing order. Nor should we forget that Saint-Simon's memoirs, with their devastating closing paragraph, did not see the light until the middle of the eighteenth century.

I do not propose to say more than a few words about the position of the writer in the eighteenth century. It was the century of the private rather than of the royal patron. It was also a good deal more democratic and egalitarian than the seventeenth century, and I think there is no doubt that the barriers between the nobility and the rest of society did tend to disappear. The private patron was less responsible than Louis XIV. He gave the tame writer plenty of license and rewarded him without much regard for the quality of his work, and he did not hesitate to administer a beating when the occasion arose.

II

The French Revolution and the destruction of the aristocracy created a completely new situation. We may think that the profession of literature had made considerable strides during the eighteenth century and that it was possible for the writer to rely to a much greater extent than before on the actual earnings from the sale of his works. That is true, but the gap between himself and his own class had also become wider, and when the aristocratic patron was swept away he found himself high and dry. This is how M. Jean-Paul Sartre describes the situation in his recent *Baudelaire*. In the eighteenth century, he says, the writer had been so to speak "aristocratized":

> He belonged, however, by family ties, friendships and the mode of his daily life to a bourgeoisie which no longer had the means to justify

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him. The result was that he had come to feel that he was a person apart, in the air and rootless, a Ganymede who had been carried off in the claws of an eagle; and he had the continual feeling that he was superior to his milieu. But after the Revolution the bourgeoisie itself assumed power. It was this class which should logically have conferred on the writer a new status; but this could only have been done if the writer had consented to return to the bourgeois fold. Now there could be no question of that. In the first place, two hundred years of royal favors had taught the writer to despise the bourgeoisie; but, what was more important, he had been accustomed to regard himself as a clerk, cultivating pure thought and pure art. If he returned to his own class, he would undergo a radical change. If the bourgeoisie was, indeed, a class of oppressors, it was not parasitic; it despoiled the worker, but it worked with him. The creation of a work of art was equivalent to providing a service. The poet was expected to place his talent at the disposal of his class in the same way as an engineer. . . . In exchange, bourgeois society would invest the writer with a special aura. But he would lose on the deal. He would sacrifice his independence and his claim to superiority. He would, to be sure, be a member of an élite, but there was also an élite of doctors and an élite of solicitors. The hierarchy was constituted inside the class in accordance with its social utility; and the guild of artists would take a secondary position just above the teaching profession.

Such is M. Sartre's account of the situation which arose after the Revolution. Whatever its origins, the Revolution led to the emergence of a new and aggressive middle class—a middle class whose ethos was essentially bourgeois in the fullest sense of that term.

My first witness from among the writers of the time is Stendhal. I am going to quote three passages from his autobiography, *La Vie de Henri Brulard*:

My family were the most aristocratic people in the town. This meant that I became a fanatical republican on the spot.

All the elements which compose the life of Chrysale[2] have been replaced in my case by romance. I believe that this speck in my telescope has been useful to me as a novelist. There is a sort of *bassesse bourgeoise* to which my characters could never succumb.

I had, and still have, the most aristocratic of tastes. I would do everything in my power to ensure the happiness of the *peuple;* but I think that I would rather spend a fortnight of every month in prison than have to live with shopkeepers.

2. He was the bourgeois parent in Molière's *Femmes savantes.*

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Stendhal like Baudelaire had personal reasons for revolting against the class into which he had been born, and we can see from the first of these three passages that his enthusiasm for political radicalism began as a protest against the attitude of his royalist family. We must, however, be clear about the implications of these pronouncements. Stendhal is not attacking merely the bourgeois like the majority of nineteenth-century writers. He is systematically rejecting the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; and this makes his position a novel one. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the writer had detached himself from one class, and if he did not succeed in becoming a member of a higher one, at least he achieved a clearly defined relation to it. In the nineteenth century he detached himself from the three main classes, but there was no other class or section of the community to which he could attach himself. This meant that ultimately he must form a new class of his own. With Stendhal the process did not go very far. He was constantly proclaiming his republicanism and his hatred of kings, but though he was officially a liberal republican, his fellow-republicans fare very ill in his novels. The principal character in *Lucien Leuwen*—the novel in which he attempts a direct criticism of the contemporary political scene—is continually deploring the dreary mediocrity of republicans and sighing for the return of a sort of silver age—very elegant, very aristocratic and, morally, decidedly lax. Although Stendhal was a great political novelist he took no active part in politics. He became like the heroes of his own novels an "outsider" and dedicated his books to "the happy few" who were scattered all over the world and who, he hoped, would enjoy them and sympathize with his opinions. But he made no attempt to organize his admirers. That was a task which was left to Baudelaire whose writings on the subject are really a development of the Stendhalian theory. His view of the writer's position is set out most clearly in his great essay on Constantin Guys:

> Dandyism is an institution which though outside the law, has its own rigorous code to which all its adherents must strictly conform, however independent and free they may be by nature. . . . Dandyism appears chiefly in periods of transition when democracy is not yet all-powerful and aristocracy is only partly tottering and degraded. In the upheavals which belong to such periods, a handful of men . . . may conceive the plan of founding a new sort of aristocracy which will be all the more difficult to destroy because it will be based on the most precious and the

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most indestructible of faculties and on the divine gifts which work and money cannot confer.

Some of Baudelaire's sentences have a melodramatic ring and the word "dandy" has not worn well. It suggests something willfully freakish and "bohemian," something too local, too nineteenth century; but the reality for which it stands is not in doubt. It is a definition of the patrician attitude. I propose therefore to drop Baudelaire's term and re-name the "dandy" the patrician.

Baudelaire's essay is really the first attempt to create a writers' party. The writers must make common cause. Against the background of a society which is still fairly rigidly divided into three classes, we see the formation of what is in effect a new aristocracy based on the indestructible values which "work and money cannot confer," on the eternal values of intelligence and sensibility. Although the new aristocracy might be recruited from any social sphere, it soon developed its own peculiar characteristics and became in Baudelaire's words an exclusive "caste."

It is interesting to look at some of the political dicta which are to be found in Baudelaire's diaries and which have not had as much attention as they deserve:

> There is no reasonable and certain form of government except an aristocratic one; monarchies or republics based on democracy are equally feeble and absurd.

Another entry has a prophetic note:

> *Politics.* In short, in the eyes of history and of the French people, the great achievement of Napoleon III will have been to prove that the first comer who gains control of the telegraph and the national printing press can govern a great nation.

He penetrates to the heart of the matter when he observes in still another entry:

> It is not particularly in political institutions that universal ruin or universal progress—for the name matters little—will manifest itself. It will be in the degradation of the human heart (*l'avilissement des coeurs*).

Although the issues were perceived more clearly in France and the statement of them by French writers was more radical, the movement was not confined to that country. Baudelaire's attack on the bourgeois and his plea for a patrician outlook had its parallel in

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England in Arnold's attack on the "philistine" and his plea for "Hellenism":

"Our puritan middle classes," said Arnold, "present a defective type of religion, a narrow range of intellect and instruction, a stunted sense of beauty, a low standard of manners."

"If," wrote Baudelaire, "if a poet asked the State for permission to keep a few bourgeois in his stable, everyone would be greatly astonished; but if a bourgeois asked for some roast poet, it would be considered perfectly natural."

Baudelaire's violent tone may appear today to be somewhat exaggerated, but the conflict between the artist and the bourgeois was a real one and we need to see it in its historical setting.

In Stendhal's *Lucien Leuwen* one of the characters remarks to another:

> M. Grandet is like myself at the head of the Bank, and since July[3] the Bank has been at the head of the State. The bourgeoisie has taken the place of the Faubourg Saint-Germain and the Bank is the nobility of the bourgeois class.

The Revolution had placed in power a middle class which was almost entirely devoted to money making. We know that the artist very properly refused to sell his pen to the bourgeois and their Bank, but this in itself is not sufficient to explain the violence of the opposition between the two. It seems at first as though there was nothing to prevent the artist from going on with his work without bothering about the banking activities of the bourgeois; but the conflict went much deeper than that. What the artist disliked was the bourgeois outlook, was Arnold's "narrow range of intellect and instruction, a stunted sense of beauty, a low standard of manners," because it was a threat to all that he stood for.

Now the conflict was sharpened because social and political changes had produced a change in the artist's vision. In the old unitary society the artist had been much more a "craftsman" than a "visionary." He might criticize abuses as Dante, Chaucer and Langland had criticized them, but there was no conflict between the artist and society. He not only expressed a communal as opposed to an individual experience; his work glorified an order in which he believed.

3. The advent of the July Monarchy.

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Cracks began to appear in the social structure in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but even in those centuries the writer was to a large extent the spokesman of an aristocratic élite. In the nineteenth century he was an "outsider" in an alien world. The old order had gone. There was no longer any external system to which his experience could be related. He therefore proclaimed that he was a "Seer" whose work was to discover a new order. He was engaged in his own way in a revision of values and, inevitably, he went into dangerous places where he made discoveries about human nature which were highly disturbing to his simpler minded contemporaries.

Nevertheless we sometimes have the impression that without willful provocation on the part of the artist there need have been no head-on collision, that the bourgeois were so immersed in the bank and the stock exchange that they would have been perfectly content to leave the artist to his own devices. That is not true. The modern artist is not merely a "Seer," he is also a revolutionary whose task is not to glorify the existing order but, as Rimbaud put it, to change it which means in practice to destroy it. Medieval art sprang from harmony between the artist and society, modern art springs from conflict between the two. It is of its essence subversive and the artist was right in doing his utmost to intensify the conflict.

The nineteenth-century preoccupation with money and material comfort and the desperation with which the commercial middle classes clung to *idées reçues* were the result of an immense sense of insecurity, an overwhelming need to find something solid and enduring in a world of dissolving values. Anything which threatened to aggravate their insecurity or to interfere with their operations on the stock exchange must be resisted at all costs. Given their premises, their instinct was obviously sound. For patrician art is necessarily individualist, sensitive, subtle, analytical, precarious and abstruse. Its very existence was unsettling, was a constant threat to security and business, as it was meant to be. The commercial middle classes retaliated by prosecuting Baudelaire and Flaubert on trumped-up charges of immorality and by breaking up exhibitions of paintings.[4] In doing so

4. "Trumped up" because their narrow preoccupation with sexual morality was evidently a rationalization, an attempt to suppress something far more disturbing which they sensed but could not define.

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they made the artist a scapegoat whose sacrifice restored, or was intended to restore, their shattered complacency.

The active part taken by the nineteenth-century artist in politics seems at first perplexing. It is, perhaps, understandable that the youthful Rimbaud should have rebelled against his world and joined the Commune; but though the notes on politics which I have already quoted were almost certainly written after Baudelaire had severed his connection with the parties in 1851, it seems strange to meet him at the barricades in 1848 fighting on the side of the insurgents. His contemporaries thought so too. One of them has described him brandishing a gun which had obviously never been used, and declaring proudly: "I have just fired a shot." "Not for the Republic surely?" asked the observer incredulously. But Baudelaire simply shouted violently to his followers: "We must go and shoot General Aupick." "I had never been so painfully struck," concludes the observer, "by the lack of character in this nature which was in many ways so fine and so original."[5]

We know of course that Baudelaire like Stendhal suffered from an extreme mother-fixation and that for this reason hated his stepfather and his ideas as much as Stendhal hated his own father and his royalism. It seems to me that on this occasion, however, the reference to Aupick was a rationalization and that Baudelaire is a symbol of the bewildered artist at odds with society who really does not know whose side he is on or whom he should shoot. In later life he came to feel that his behavior had been inconsistent. "What was the nature of my intoxication in 1848?" he asked in his diary. He answered: "Thirst for revenge. Natural delight in destruction. A literary intoxication; the memories of books I had read." But there was a deeper reason. "I can understand a man forsaking one cause," he wrote, "in order to see what it feels like to support a different one."

At bottom the problem was psychological. The modern artist realized that he was an explorer trying to discover new realms of experience, that he was irrevocably committed to a policy of development and change. This meant that any form of conservatism, any

5. The observer was Buisson. The story is told in Crépet, *Charles Baudelaire,* pp. 78-9. On Baudelaire's political activities, see J. Mouquet & W. T. Bandy, *Baudelaire en 1848,* Paris, 1946.

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policy which aimed at preserving a static order was felt to be inimical to his aspirations as an artist and must be opposed. Baudelaire himself spoke of the "dandy's" attitude of "opposition and revolt." It is difficult not to feel that his psychological need of perpetual change and an incomplete analysis of the political situation led him and others like him to make a major strategic error. In its initial stages, the conflict between the artist and the bourgeois was a middle-class crisis, was a struggle for supremacy inside a class to which both opponents belonged by birth. The correct strategy for the artist would have been to "contain" his opponents by becoming a permanent opposition and to limit the conflict which by spreading could only distract him from his proper work. Instead of that he made the mistake which is being repeated by the twentieth-century artist. He allowed himself to be carried away by the general atmosphere of violence—the "natural delight in destruction"—and he allowed his anxiety to destroy his *cultural* enemies to drive him into a *political* alliance with those elements whose triumph could only end in the destruction of the artist *and* the bourgeois. The artist can never subordinate his own interests to those of a particular class or a particular political party with impunity. The formation of the "exclusive caste" was the real solution of his problem, but by identifying himself with the revolutionary movements of his time he simply undid his own work. It was or should have been evident that they were trying to produce a world in which there was no place for the patrician or his art, that the last thing to be tolerated in a "classless society" is an "exclusive caste." The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Revolutionaries always begin by wooing the artist because they are astute enough to see that he is the born "collaborator" who will do them service by undermining the moral and political foundations of the middle classes. They are ready enough, too, to make use of his pen for their propaganda, but once their political aims have been achieved they make short work of the artist and his like.

III

We can see, therefore, that though the conflict between the writer and the bourgeois was not the invention of the nineteenth century, the problem was completely transformed during that century by

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the identification of cultural and political aims. When we turn to our own age we find that the dilemma has become more acute. These are some characteristic pronouncements made by English writers between 1937 and 1947:

A writer who wishes to produce the best work that he is capable of producing must first of all become a socialist in his practical life, must go over to the progressive side of the class-conflict (Edward Upward).

The only thoroughly satisfying attitude for the writer today, the only way in which his life can become an integrated whole with the life around him, is by participation in political activity: yet such participation in political activity is likely to eliminate altogether his capacity to produce art (Julian Symons).

Either you go into politics or you stay out. . . . Literary values are human values: those who cherish literary values must associate themselves with political movements which set human values first: or they must reconcile themselves to being ineffectual bewailers of a dying civilization (Christopher Hill).

One of the oddest features of English literary life in the thirties was the tendency of young men who had had the most expensive sort of education to reverse the movement of their predecessors and to throw in their lot with what Stendhal contemptuously called "shopkeepers." It was not a very happy experiment in *déclassement*. They were in general despised by the party-member who did not hesitate to stigmatize them as "bourgeois," and political dogmatism ruined such small talent for verse-writing as they have possessed.

What is particularly disquieting about the three passages I have just quoted is the naive assumption that your only hope of writing well is to purchase the party ticket and the equally groundless assumption that politics should be preferred to art, that you must conform to the party line even if it means sacrificing yourself as a writer.

Although these assumptions must be rejected absolutely, the pronouncements of the three writers do draw attention to a genuine dilemma which cannot be shirked. It is of course the problem of the writer in politics which has become inseparable from the problem of the writer in society. The contemporary writer's obsession with politics is not accidental. It has been forced on him by the transformation of the political scene during the past hundred years. He has come to realize that he is a twofold being, that he has his duty as a writer and his duty as a citizen at the polling booth. When political parties in

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England were divided over questions like Catholic Emancipation or the relative merits of protection and free trade, the writer could very well argue that his interests *as a writer* were not directly affected and that there was no need for him to vote at all. Now this attitude of political neutrality has become untenable. The writer cannot remain neutral in a world which is not only divided by irreconcilable philosophies, but by philosophies which touch life at almost every point and are therefore bound to affect his interests as a writer. This means that he is bound to take up a position toward the political conflicts of his time and that he must decide on the relation between his attitude as a writer and his attitude as a voter.

What then is he to do? Clearly his first obligation is to write well and to see that the writer in him is never sacrificed to the politician whatever his views. This means that he must remain true to the principle of non-attachment, that he must regard the words *déclassé et déraciné* as a factual description of his vocation. The social and political structure of a country is invariably rigid and is dictated by considerations which have very little to do with the aspirations of the writer. He may belong by birth to a particular class and he may regard one political party as less of a menace than another; but he can never give more than a limited support to any party because he is committed to standards which transcend their immediate aims and because there can never be absolute correspondence between his views as a writer and the policy of any one party. He simply has to make the best of a bad job. It is not a solution to imagine that we might one day have a center party which all men of good will might be able to support and which would effectively exclude the more disreputable elements of the present Right and Left. "*Entre autres idées enfantines, le prince prétend avoir un ministère moral.*" This sentence from the *Chartreuse de Parme* explains very neatly the reasons for the collapse of liberal parties in all countries. In an age of violence and extremism there is no place for a *ministère moral,* and a party based on ethical principles is at a disadvantage in a world of political gangsters. Writers are always in a minority; they can never have sufficient influence in present conditions to change the political structure of a country, and a vote for a *ministère moral* merely increases the chances of the more dangerous of the other parties coming to power.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized therefore that a writer's

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responsibility as a writer is paramount. He cannot commit himself to party membership or, unreservedly, to any political program. His attitude must be completely opportunist. He cannot remain neutral, but it is not his business to work out political programs or to sell his pen to the propaganda machine of any of the parties. He should only take part in politics in so far as it is necessary to safeguard his interests as a writer. The nature and scope of his activities are dictated by the immediate political situation. In peaceful times he should give no more than a limited support to the party which is likely to do least damage to his interests as a writer. In times of political strife like the present he is bound to become more active. This necessarily makes the task of harmonizing his literary and his political views more difficult and brings me to my final point.

Baudelaire's general attitude remains valid, but the enemy is no longer the same. It would be sheer waste of time and energy to engage in sham fights against the bourgeois. We are faced with a far more serious threat to our independence and we should be clear about the nature of the enemy. It is doubtful whether the writer can today give even a limited support to any party; he must work and vote against the party which constitutes the greatest threat to his independence.

In a broadcast discussion on "The Artist and Society" in July 1948 Mr. V. S. Pritchett remarked: "Writers are saved by what can only be called the inherited professional instinct of party disloyalty." Mr. Graham Greene went one better: "And that is a genuine duty we owe society; to be a piece of grit in the State machinery."

As things are, there is virtually nothing to add to these statements of the writer's attitude. For the role of the patrician in the police State can only be that of saboteur and resistance leader.

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F. W. Dupee

HENRY JAMES IN THE GREAT GREY BABYLON*

The idealistic formula of James's early fiction proved less workable after 1880, partly because he had worked it so much. But it sustained him through *The Portrait of a Lady,* holding its own against the sheer magnitude of that work, the considerable realism of the settings and portraits, the attractions that lay *du côté de chez Warburton.* He thoroughly knew those attractions himself when he wrote the novel. *Daisy Miller* had made him something of a celebrity; his acquaintance now ranged from Tennyson to Fanny Kemble, from George Moore to Lord Rosebery, and in a single London winter he dined out 107 times. Recalling the anxious years in America, he wrote in his notebook: "Now that life has brought something, brought a measurable part of what I dreamed of then, it is touching enough to look back. I knew at least what I wanted then—to see something of the world. I have seen a good deal of it, and I look at the past in the light of this knowledge. What strikes me is the definiteness, the unerringness of those longings. I wanted to do very much what I have done, and success, if I may say so, now stretches back a tender hand to its younger brother, desire."

A success of happiness, a success on his own high terms. It was as the poet—the ironic poet, to be sure—of American innocence that he was making his way in worldly old England. He was a "lion," however modest, on the strength of a tale about a Schenectady girl who would not herself have been invited anywhere. In this pleasant paradox many things were vindicated: his European residence, his love of the world, the persuasiveness of his art.

It is true that James's "perturbed spirit," as he called it, was al-

* From a forthcoming life of Henry James to be published in the American Men of Letters Series by William Sloane Associates.

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ways with him. Americans did not sufficiently appreciate his tribute; and the Cambridge circle remained, or he seems to have thought it remained, keenly vigilant of his activities. We shall return to that in a moment. Meanwhile, as his letters and even more his notebook entries testify, he was expanding like someone who had broken through the major confinements of his youth.

In 1881 he confided to his notebook a rapid summary of his English life so far. The passage, all but unique in James, is in a fluid easy prose, its keynote being a kind of breathless joy—with compunctious undertones—in his enchanted mobility: it looks forward to the pleasure-sad prose of Hemingway and Fitzgerald. Although settled in London, he continues to travel in Britain as well as on the Continent. He has begun his practice of confining his journeys to France, Italy, and Germany—expansion must stop somewhere. Yet a friend, whom he fails to identify, "gave me the nostalgia of the sun, of the south, of colour, of freedom, of being one's own master, and doing absolutely what one pleases. He used to say, 'I know such a sunny corner, under the south wall of old Toledo. There's a wild fig tree growing there; I have lain on the grass, with my guitar.' " But this friend—surely an American!—goes to places "simply for their own sake, and without making any use of it—that, with him, is a passion," James notes with some astonishment. He must put this delightful vagabond in a book, he concludes, as if to remind himself of his responsibilities.

"Prolonged idleness exasperates and depresses me," he wrote. And he was constantly at work on something, often turning his travels into copy for American periodicals, the manuscript of the *Portrait* accompanying him from country-house to country-house and hotel to hotel through England, Scotland, France, Italy. With the increased demand for his fiction, writing became ever more of a strenuous routine; it also remained an intimate rite, a form of daily self-communion and spiritual exercise.

The vogue of the "serial" was still in force. Beginning with the *Portrait,* James produced a succession of lengthy novels (together with many shorter things) which came out in installments in the *Atlantic* or the *Cornhill, Scribner's* or the *Century.* Many times the initial chapters appeared before the novel was half finished. This was nerve-racking for him, but it had distinguished precedents in the profession

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to which he was now assimilating himself. He was, as he said of Daudet, "not an occasional or desultory poet" but "a soldier in the great army of constant producers," the army of Balzac and Dickens. The serial was a stupid convention, he insisted; yet it was sociable; and he must have been gratified to feel that readers were saying, as one of his characters says of *Daniel Deronda,* "I should have liked it to continue indefinitely, to keep coming out always, to be one of the regular things of life."

It was his way to define his limits in proportion as he extended them: a letting out, a pulling in. Settled in England, a success and on his own, he began to evolve a vast inner structure of habit and scruple which rendered him firm, even hard, wherever he might be touched. It could give way surprisingly at times but it was always there: the sea-wall against a fearful fluidity within. If he felt the nostalgia "of doing absolutely what one pleases," he could also write apropos of a story he was planning: "the question, as a matter of ethics, seems to me to have but one answer; if he had offered marriage to Miss Rosslyn (or whatever her name) by that offer he should abide." And his heroes will usually abide by their contracts and do the correct thing, however special their reasons. So too with their manners. The invalid soldier of his early story who felt that "a man was not to go a-wooing in his dressing-gown and slippers" was the forefather of all those Jamesian gentlemen who will make a perpetual fuss about rising or smoking in the presence of ladies; and Isabel's book is unmistakably the portrait of a *lady*—an *Il Cortegiano* for the new American aristocracy.

This flagrant decorum, as the elder James might have called it, was carried to excess and tended toward self-parody. At its best it was a necessary part of the chivalrous atmosphere of the novels. And it had its dramatic uses, as when Isabel, seeing Osmond seated while Mme. Merle is standing, guesses their guilty intimacy. In all this there is again an element of simple self-gratification on James's part. If free spirits *ought* to behave decorously in an age corrupted by romantic ethics and Bohemian manners, the practice nevertheless reflects the author's own fiercely conservative instincts. "I doubt whether there was ever a provincial man of quality so punctilious in breeding as he is," wrote Tocqueville of the American in Europe. "He is full of scruples and at the same time of pretensions." And

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James presently found himself holding the line against the democratization of manners among Englishmen themselves, of whom Browning impressed him as coarse, Tennyson as inept and preoccupied. Dubious, even absurd as all this was, he held to it with a passion. He was unique among novelists in his feeling for the conventional, his power to associate it with the good and the beautiful. Literary traditionalism, which on philosophic grounds has since gone far beyond James, has not followed him in this. Prufrock's dandyism is a sign of Prufrock's desperation. "Do I dare to eat a peach?"

James's personal legend was still in the making in the 70's and 80's and he was not yet so freakishly ceremonial in appearance as he afterwards became. Yet he had a shadowy look in the eyes which made someone liken him to an Elizabethan and add that he ought to wear earrings. His beard and close-cropped hair were a Paris fashion. Gosse, who first met him in 1882, says that "his manner was grave, extremely courteous, but a little formal and frightened, which seemed strange in a man living in constant communication with the world." Nevertheless "his talk, which flowed best with one of us alone, was enchanting."

After the reserves of his Paris year, he opened up considerably to the English. There was the bond of language and morality, and there was the conservative English genius and power. France was "clever" but England was "great"; in fact, "the English are the only people who can do great things without being clever." He said this repeatedly in various ways, playing the nations off against one another and himself off against both. But chiefly England was powerful and London was a sign of it: "the great grey Babylon" of the modern world, deficient in style but wearing "proudly and publicly the stamp of her imperial history." He first took rooms within hearing of Piccadilly traffic, although in time convenience forced his removal, first to Kensington, at last to the country town of Rye.

These lodgings were the centers of his dual existence as an immense worker in literature and a perpetual guest at dinner parties and week-end gatherings in the country. London society, as pictured in his novels, lies open to easy conquest by anyone who can in the least amuse it. And so it appears to have been with him. "I can hardly say how it was," he observes in the notebooks, "but little by little I came to know people, to dine out, etc. I did, I was able to do, nothing

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at all to bring this state of things about; it came rather of itself. I had very few letters—I was afraid of letters. Three or four from Henry Adams, three or four from Mrs. Wister, of which I only, as I think, presented one." Before he had been three months in London he had breakfasted at Lord Houghton's with John Morley and others, and dined there with Tennyson, Schliemann, and Gladstone; and "behold me after dinner conversing affably with Mr. Gladstone—not by my seeking but by the almost importunate affection of Lord H." Another time he found himself "being conversed with in low, but harmonious tones by George Eliot," who showed, as he must have expected, "a tendency to *aborder* only the highest themes." James's social life was never so exceptional as it inevitably appears to uninstructed Americans. Hardy and Meredith, for example, were seen in the same Pall Mall clubs and many of the same drawing-rooms. His passage into aristocratic circles was made easy by the respect that literature still commanded in Victorian society, although he was soon to complain that this was not sufficiently the case. A duke could be trusted to broach rather low themes; and some daughter of an ancient family, the flower of her race, seated with you in a room aromatic of Queen Anne, would break silence now and then to inquire what pack you hunted with or whether you went in much for tennis. The company might be dull but the circumstances implied better things past or to come, especially the ancestral houses, those symbols of "shared experience" on a magnificent scale—"Montacute, the admirable; Barrington, that superb Ford Abbey. These delicious old houses, in the long August days, in the south of England air, on the soil over which so much has passed and out of which so much has come, rose before me like a series of visions." This is from the notebooks; the whole passage is quintessential James. And to adjust the vision to the fact became his great purpose as an artist, although it meant that he had also to become a *kind* of English citizen—not till just before his death did he embrace legal citizenship.

No doubt his standards of good conversation were romantically high; so at times was his faith in his own moral clairvoyance. "I find people in general very vulgar-minded and superficial—and it is only by a pious fiction, to keep myself going, and keep on the social harness, that I succeed in postulating them as anything else or better." This to his mother in 1879. Like the *Portrait,* begun the

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following year, it suggests that he was still the triumphant American in England, his claim to detachment uncompromised, his "point of view" intact. The attitude was admirable, it had promoted his success so far, but it could not last short of his remaining in a state of continuous initiation. Those who argue that he might have kept it up, either by returning to America or by going into a noble seclusion abroad, are saying in effect that he should have remained a perpetual youth or been some other person. James himself did the greater thing. He ceased to argue with life, so far as he could; he took the conditions of his genius for granted, so far as he could. His intimate associations with America made any prolonged stay there unthinkable, as he was always to find on his rare transatlantic visits. To be ruled by ghosts was irresponsible; but he could act upon a deeper responsibility, which was finally to embrace some possible form of life and take his chances on his point of view. This was what he did—again to the limit of his capacity; and the point of view certainly underwent a blurring; the clairvoyance gave way to a search, sometimes patient and sometimes frantic, for enlightenment in a denser medium. That search vexed the Brahmin equanimity of his youthful mind, it infused his language with images of terror and strangeness, with words like "abysmal" and "unspeakable"; it made him a great writer. Meanwhile the medium was dense not because it was English—English ways were more accessible to him than American ones—but because it was life, and he had accepted it, and because he could no longer pretend to find life—"the cold Medusa-face of life"—easily scrutable.

Significantly, too, he overdid the social regimen, accepted too many engagements. Complaints of the resultant fatigue and boredom and interruption of work fill his letters and notebooks. Yet he does not judge the life by its excesses and for twenty years he continues in harness, abusing the privilege of society in order to be assured that it is still his. Serenity, in other words, he rarely knew except in hours of work. While his enjoyment of the surface of life was franker, his compunctions turned inward and deepened. For it is not suggested that his old feeling of estrangement—the "otherness" commemorated in his memoirs—had vanished, but only that he had found a basis on which use could be made of it and his further development as an artist made possible. He claimed to be an outsider still,

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and there is no reason to dispute him. His English friendships were gratifying. Those with Gosse, Stevenson, Du Maurier, and other writers and artists appeased some of his early desire for intellectual companionship; and there was another kind of pleasure in the gaily maternal company of voluble *femmes du monde* like Fanny Kemble and Mrs. Greville. Seldom did such associations reach into the depths where the passions were formed—at any rate, not yet, although the author of *The Awkward Age* (1898) would at last feel the poetry of the London hostess as deeply as ever he did that of Minny Temple. What did penetrate at once was a sense of the society as a whole: its human types, manners, routines, houses, charms, horrors.

This worldly image or imaged world he embraced with an intensity to which his confirmed nostalgia doubtless contributed—no insider like a reformed outsider. And he became the extremely critical champion of luxury and privilege. "Can you imagine anything so vulgar as the gold?" his sister Alice was to demand, referring to the gifts at a wedding where it was reported that the bride even carried a silver prayer-book. "Surely," James replied, "a lady who can eat off gold ought to be able to afford to pray out of silver!" This was a joke; but when he announced, although not to his sister, "I can stand a great deal of gold," it was not only a confession and a boast but a challenge. If gold was "vulgar," there was something hardly less so, which was the failure to appreciate it; the refusal, on whatever doctrinaire grounds, to admit its sheer weight in the realm of the actual, its capacity to benefit and to harm. To benefit or harm individuals, that is, for his great sense of the importance of human beings was as ever. The aristocratic society was the men and women who made it up; its quality appeared in the quality of their minds and relations. He was forever observing people—a friend, a fellow-guest, a man on a park bench; and so the unpleasanter facts of the existing *beau monde* by no means escaped him. Indeed his identification with it was advertised by his habit of taking it more seriously than it took itself; and he knew the discomfort of playing the self-appointed scourge to people who were beyond caring. But although he became occupied to the point of obsession with the actual abuses of money and leisure, he never questioned the aristocratic ideal itself. He did not even think of the existing aristocracy as a class among others. All the crowded and laborious life beyond it was for him so much Limbo,

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inert except for the straining here and there of some ambitious soul bent on breaking loose. The working classes were the barbarians; "in England," he told Norton, "the Huns and Vandals will have to come *up*—from the black depths of the (in the people) enormous misery." He was to write a few stories and one long novel about men and women of the servant or the working class; and in most cases their yearning toward the superior world makes up their very substance. Unlike Flaubert of *Un Coeur Simple,* he could see nothing but pathos and unreality in states of penury and servitude. Ignorant and stifling as it was, this was nevertheless his impassioned point of view, and the very narrowness of it made him strangely eloquent on the subject. The appurtenances of the poor were "the merciless signs of mere mean stale feelings." Poverty was the total failure of the human.

He felt all this very strongly himself, as strongly as if he also had once been poor and Cambridge had been a slum. The words "vulgar" and "provincial" were compulsive with him. His snobbishness, like his prudishness, was real—even though that was not the whole story. Any deeper sympathies first told on his nerves; and whatever else his stories of plebeian life may mean, they denote an extraordinary fastidiousness on their author's part. He came in time to avow this more openly and to treat his friends to humorously arrogant displays of it. What perhaps signified to him a certain complicated wholeness of mind on his own part could be trusted to strike them as merely arbitrary and so shock or amuse them. "Economy of means —economy of effect," he once said of an evening's entertainment on which his hosts had skimped. "I was amazed . . . ," writes Desmond MacCarthy, "by . . . his remark on our leaving what appeared to me a thoroughly well-appointed, prosperous house, 'Poor S., poor S. —the stamp of unmistakable poverty upon everything.' . . . His dislike of squalor was so great that surroundings to be tolerable to him had positively to proclaim its utter impossibility." His shrinking from the squalid was the reflex of his striving toward the gold—power, beauty, freedom. And in his dream of an aristocracy of talents *and* money were reconciled two opposing American ideals of long standing, not to mention those of his own family.

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Leslie A. Fiedler

PARK WITH LOVERS

If Sherman's horse can take it, why can't you?

The Heroes cry "stone" among the rubble;
Their horses, goosed by the jocular lubber,
Gasp "stone," too— and through what gossip
The leaves afford, drops the dim pebble
Of dark's usual affront to the last puddle
Of light, where dust lights like a cripple.

Wits, mocking the grass or occasional cripple,
Spit, but without animus, split the rubble
With the mouth's white star, contemptuous puddle.
The lovers toward dusk wince at the lubber,
Their moist eyes troubled by his scorn's pebble,
Whose fall they fear ripples to gossip.

They are not afraid of the leaves' garbled gossip,
The short annals of twigs they made cripple
With their bodies tossed like a pebble,
Forgotten before lost or remanded to rubble.
Their business, their beauty is brief—what lubber
Plunges back from the bushes to night's other puddle?

They look for each other in that unlit puddle,
But their eyes, flinching from sweat or gossip,
Undo reflection. The tart touches the lubber;
They remember the drowned lovers. The cripple
Of their sex regrets now in the rubble
Of buttons or silk hardness of the pebble.

What star pelts them with the blue pebble
Of its light they will redeem in the puddle
Of slight remembering; or save, in the rubble
Of fumbled ecstasies before age, dull gossip,
Discovers in himself time's cripple,
Who went forth a tall, untiring lubber.

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Yet something of the lover will, poor lubber,
Glint like the not quite sullied pebble,
Past the fish in the undertow, the cripple
Of tides; for the sea is implied in each puddle,
And the sea's lashing lashes the gossip
Of small rain in the drains or on rubble.

Lubber, from the last silence of stone and rubble,
Sing over the dust's gossip, cry to the pebble,
That love, Light's cripple, lay on your puddle!

Louis Simpson

BROOKLYN FLATS

As I went down to Brooklyn Flats
Five engines jetted in the wind
Faster than the speed of sound
Swerving in unison like rats.
That's why I weep and cannot sleep.

I saw a poster of my You,
A laughing girl of giant size.
Upward between her purple thighs
Someone had nailed a horse's shoe.
Whose thudding kick will make men sick.

Then turning for an older view,
The little sun the snailing sea
And chapel bells that tinkled tea,
An echo said it wouldn't do.
Where suns and moons are parson's spoons.

Tonight, in absence of the truth,
No angel seems so strong and fair
Nor winged as those five engines were,
And till a star grows bright with ruth
I will adore what I abhor.

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Martin Greenberg

WINSTON CHURCHILL, TORY DEMOCRAT

The age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever.
—Burke

Then the world was not only made for a few, but a very few.—Disraeli (in *Sybil*)

It is all the fault of Democracy and Science. . . . Instead of a small number of well-trained professionals championing their country's cause with ancient weapons and a beautiful intricacy of archaic manoeuvre, sustained at every moment by the applause of their nation, we now have entire populations, including even women and children, pitted against one another in brutish mutual extermination, and only a set of blear-eyed clerks left to add up the butcher's bill.

This sentiment, voiced by Winston Churchill in 1930 in the memoirs of his youth, has been a constant one with him and he repeats it, in the third volume of his present account of the Second World War,[1] in connection with his tribute to Rommel: "In the sombre wars of modern democracy chivalry finds no place. Dull butcheries on a gigantic scale and mass effects overwhelm all detached sentiment." Yet the champion of ancient weapons and archaic maneuver has played a leading role in the two great "democratic butcheries" of the twentieth century and has had to concern himself with tanks, airplanes, radar, and atomic bombs. There would be a melancholy irony in this if Churchill were a weary aristocrat dragging out his days and duties in a sordid world of "mass effects," and a banal irony if his attachment to an earlier age—to "the old world of culture and quality, of hierarchies and traditions, of values and decorum," as he has put it—were merely nostalgia allowing for fine rhetoric in books, but making no real part of the character of the man.

1. *The Second World War*: Vol. I, *The Gathering Storm;* Vol. II, *Their Finest Hour;* Vol. III, *The Grand Alliance;* Houghton Mifflin. These three volumes cover a period (through December 1941) in which Churchill's influence on the conduct of the war in the West was decisive and overwhelming; they constitute a natural division of his extensive history. In Vol. IV, *The Hinge of Fate,* which is of enormous interest but appeared too late to be considered here, Roosevelt and the American General Staff taking a vigorous part in the direction of the war, it ceases to be so very much Churchill's personal affair.

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It is however a genuine sense of loss which he feels, and which he can express at times with almost Yeatsian feeling:

In those days English Society still existed in its old form. . . . the glittering parties at Lansdowne House, Devonshire House or Stafford House comprised all the elements which made a gay and splendid social circle in close relation to the business of Parliament, the hierarchies of the Army and Navy, and the policy of the State. Now Lansdowne House and Devonshire House have been turned into hotels, flats and restaurants; and Stafford House has become the ugliest and stupidest museum in the world, in whose faded saloons Socialist Governments drearily dispense the public hospitality.

Pledged by his sentiments and sympathies to the *ancien régime,* yet obliged to live and work in the modern—how is it that irony has no hold on Churchill?

Because he will not allow it to. Irony is a nuance, and in the strong light of Churchill's energy and hardheadedness all nuances are instantly dispelled. He has never permitted his sympathy for the past to blur his vision of the present. In *My Early Life,* one of the best written of his books (before his style had grown so orotund), Churchill gives an account of his experiences as a subaltern with the 21st Lancers in Kitchener's campaign against the Dervishes of the Sudan. At the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, he took part in a cavalry charge whose couched lances and brandished swords must have stirred him over and beyond the simple excitement of the occasion. But Churchill had a game shoulder and in mid-career returned his sword, with great difficulty, to its flapping scabbard and drew a Mauser automatic pistol (certainly no "ancient weapon"!), with which he had prudently provided himself. The pistol proved a success, though the charge did not. Afterward, a few fusillades by two squadrons of dismounted Lancers did, at a great saving of lives, what the entire regiment had been unable to do with horse and lance, and convinced Churchill of the "futility of the much vaunted *Arme Blanche.*"

He has been sheathing that sword and drawing a pistol in its stead all his life. Regret for the nineteenth century has never caused Churchill to repine at the twentieth. With that reasonableness and absence of foolish intransigence which have generally characterized the English aristocracy, he accepts the conditions of the modern world, and has taken not only a dutiful but an enthusiastic share in the wars and politics of Great Britain. It is an interesting question why Churchill has been able to function so well in a world with which he feels himself to be so much at odds. In a general way we can say that, though the power of the English aristocracy was gradually broken, their morale

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was not. Their stake in the country was not destroyed; it was still possible to win that fame in public life which for Englishmen is the summit of distinction and even yet join the company of the Pitts, Disraeli, Gladstone. The times might be degenerate, but for such a man as Churchill, the antithesis of the Hamlet type, they are never out of joint. A more particular explanation, however, is to be found in the strange aborted career of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, the first Churchill after the victor of Blenheim who had seemed to promise greatness. But then came the ill-judged offer of resignation from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, which was accepted, and Lord Randolph, not wholly reluctantly (Churchill tells us in the biography of his father that the latter, more of a Hamlet than his son, experienced a periodic revulsion against politics), retired from the public scene (as it proved) forever. In his autobiography Churchill recalls visitors to Harrow, on the morrow of his father's resignation, pointing him out among the boys trooping to chapel. Without having suffered from paternal psychological domination, he admired his father tremendously, and his career has been, among other things, a vindication of his parent. The father's failure spurred the son to his success.

Like his father, Churchill is a staunch believer in the progressive Toryism of Disraeli, and has not only accepted modern innovation as inevitable but on occasion has even welcomed it. Tory Democracy, though in large part simply a stratagem to win the Radical proletariat over from the Liberal middle class to the side of the Tory gentry (as it is now being revived in an attempt to win the working class away from the Labor Party), was not the desperate and cynical expedient that such amalgams have generally been on the Continent; there was also in it a genuine solicitude for the worker's lot and it eased the way to the introduction of important reforms. Certainly it was, in the person of Lord Randolph and the other members of the "Fourth Party," a goad to the benighted complacency of the dominant section of the Conservative Party. For Churchill it was an education that he might not otherwise have acquired. Of the time he is so fond of recalling in his autobiography he can also say (in *The World Crisis*), after Disraeli: "In those days England was for the few—and for the very few." He speaks with pride of having helped to write England's first Unemployment Insurance Act, and in *My Early Life,* apropos of his childhood nurse, a Mrs. Everest, Churchill writes:

When I think of the fate of poor old women, so many of whom have no one to look after them and nothing to live on at the end of their lives, I am glad to have had a hand in all that structure of pensions and insurance which no other country can rival and which is especially a help to them.

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There is no demagogy in this (Churchill is rarely false to his own conception of himself), but rather aristocratic magnanimity. Of course, the English working class prefers, against Churchill, to think of itself not as "the poor" (a Christian, not a Marxist concept) receiving charity on sufferance, but as modern Labor winning by right; that "Tory working class" which Churchill is fond of discovering is a very small one. Still, he is not at all the consistent reactionary he has been painted.

This question of Churchill's being a reactionary deserves looking into and can lead, I think, to our gaining an essential insight into the man. All the charges that have been made against him can be got conveniently together into one sentence, something like this: "Churchill is a warmongering imperialist, an enemy of labor, one who is filled with a malignant hatred of the Russian Revolution, and who has praised and even felicitated Hitler and Mussolini." The Stalinist sound that this has is no accident, for it is chiefly the Stalinists, and "progressive people" in general, who have made of him a reactionary bogeyman. What used to be called his warmongering we now call his wisdom and courage in having carried on single-handed a campaign for British rearmament against the menace of Nazi Germany. It is nevertheless true that Churchill, though he quotes Siegfried Sassoon in *The Gathering Storm*—

> *Shoulder to aching shoulder, side by side*
> *They trudged away from life's broad wealds of light—*

and may perhaps have read Sassoon's memoirs, never understood the revulsion that the First World War inspired, particularly in the young; for him, one of the few nineteenth-century spirits to pass through the fires of the war unscathed, the Oxford Pledge was not only "foolish" but "base."

As for being an imperialist and an enemy of labor, the one title he proudly lays claim to and the other derives from his having advocated using troops to break certain strikes; one may deplore these things, but they do not warrant the virulence of the abuse heaped on him by liberals before the war, or the condescension (grudging praise being given him as a wartime Prime Minister) shown him by a Harold Laski after it. His hatred of the Russian Revolution, which is first of all a hostility to Bolshevism, we now also are inclined to look at with a milder eye; Churchill correctly characterized Bolshevism as "the absolute rule of a self-chosen priesthood," though this referred more to the older Bolshevism and to Trotsky—it occurs in a rather nasty and (what is rare for him) hysterical piece, entitled "Leon Trotsky, *alias* Bron-

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stein," in his *Great Contemporaries*—than to Stalin.[2] Stalin's triumph and the Moscow Trials he grossly blundered in regarding as evidence of the abatement of "the virulence of communism in Russia's blood. The process may be cruel, but it is not morbid. It is a need of self-preservation which impels the Soviet Government to extrude Trotsky and his fresh-distilled poisons."

But for the understanding of Churchill there is nothing better than a close consideration of what actually was involved in his having praised Hitler and Mussolini. It must be remembered that the kind words he addressed to the two dictators were first of all a piece of diplomacy, however mistaken. Though out of government at the time, Churchill was a prominent public figure arguing hotly for rearmament against the very countries whose heads he then proceeded to compliment. He meant by this to indicate that the rearmament which he was advocating was defensive and not aggressive in intent; that he desired Great Britain, though armed, to live at peace with Germany and Italy, whose grievances he was willing to understand. That is, it was a piece of old-fashioned diplomacy which should not have been taken too literally. But diplomacy was lost on so complete a creature of modern times as Hitler, and elsewhere it was misunderstood to signify Churchill's approval of the doctrines of Fascism and National Socialism. There was also in it a touch of foolish chivalry. "I admire men who stand up for their country in defeat, even though I am on the other side," he writes in *The Gathering Storm;* at a time when, he says, he knew little of the man or his doctrine, he thought that "Hitler had a perfect right to be a patriotic German if he chose. I always wanted England, Germany, and France to be friends."

What we have in Churchill, we can see from this and other things, is not so much a reactionary as an anachronism—a nineteenth-century statesman upholding policy in a twentieth-century world of ideology. This distinction between policy and ideology is perhaps difficult to define, but is easy enough to recognize. The difference is evoked well, if floridly, in these lines by Churchill on the assembly in Paris of the victorious leaders of the First World War:

Gone were the days of the Treaties of Utrecht and Vienna, when aristocratic statesmen and diplomats, victor and vanquished alike, met

2. "I must confess that I never liked Trotsky," Churchill said in 1944—perhaps in part because of the resemblance that has been noted to exist between these two Men of Action and of Letters. Both were better leaders and administrators than politicians; both had a past of political unorthodoxy; and both flourished in times of crisis, being compelled to go reluctantly back to their desks by the "politicians" when these were over.

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in polite and courtly disputation, and, free from the clatter and babel of democracy, could reshape systems upon the fundamentals of which they were all agreed. The peoples, transported by their sufferings and by the mass teachings with which they had been inspired, stood around in scores of millions to demand that retribution should be exacted to the full.

Policy is the content of politics in a time and place in which those who enjoy political power are agreed as to fundamentals, generally a way of life which none would think to question. Policy is practical and empirical, rather than philosophical and moral, and is limited in scope, having nothing to say about the nonpolitical areas of life. The ends are given in advance. An ideology, however, represents the politicalization of the whole of life; it is an attempt to give an intellectual construction the authority of a religion and make it do duty as a way of life. Where politics is ideological, everything tends to be called into question, including the humanity of your opponent. Policy is more genial than ideology, more consciously cynical, less concerned with justice, and perhaps less terrible for that reason.

In an address delivered before the Conservative Members Committee on Foreign Affairs in March 1936, which he reprints in *The Gathering Storm,* Churchill stated very clearly the nonideological principles that he thinks ought to guide British foreign policy:

For four hundred years the foreign policy of England has been to oppose the strongest, most aggressive, most dominating power on the Continent, and particularly to prevent the Low Countries falling into the hands of such a Power. . . . Therefore, we should not be afraid of being accused of being pro-French or anti-German. If the circumstances were reversed, we could equally be pro-German and anti-French. It is a law of public policy which we are following, and not a mere expedient dictated by accidental circumstances, or likes and dislikes, or any other sentiment. . . . We ought to set the life and endurance of the British Empire and the greatness of this island very high in our duty, and not be led astray by illusions about an ideal world, which only means that other and worse controls will step into our place, and that the future direction will belong to them.

Implicit in this is that cynicism—here erected into a principle—which made the old diplomacy notorious and which gave Albion in particular, in the nineteenth century, its reputation for being perfidious. Today diplomacy is on the whole no longer cynical but sincere. The old diplomacy suffered from a bad conscience and cloaked its dealings in secrecy. The new diplomacy, for which the ends justify the most cynical changes of line, is entirely self-righteous and blatantly open. In

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former days when a diplomat made a statement you understood him as meaning the very opposite of what he said. Now, alas, nations grow more honest. When Hitler said that the chief enemy of the Third Reich was the Jews, he meant it—it was not, as people so long thought, "mostly propaganda." When Stalin says that the Soviet Union is encircled by aggressive capitalist powers filled with a consuming hatred of the land of socialism and intent only upon destroying it, he unfortunately really thinks so.

Hitler, confirmed ideologue that he was, made the mistake of thinking everybody else one too. On the eve of the German attack on Russia, when Churchill was considering what England's course should be in that event, he expressed the opinion—a correct one, I believe—that Hitler was counting on enlisting capitalist and right-wing sympathies in England and America. Stalin doubtless shared this expectation with Hitler, which would account in part for the grudging and suspicious manner with which he received Churchill's professions of friendship and offers of aid. But Churchill was not such a "Marxist" as Hitler and Stalin. When "asked whether for him, the arch anti-Communist," coming to the aid of Bolshevik Russia "was not bowing down in the House of Rimmon," he replied, with nineteenth-century "cynicism":

"Not at all. I have only one purpose, the destruction of Hitler, and my life is much simplified thereby. If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons."

The following day, June 22, 1941, German troops invaded the Soviet Union. That evening, over the BBC, Churchill said, diplomatically, his bad oratory mirroring his "bad faith":

No one has been a more consistent opponent of Communism than I have for the last twenty-five years. I will unsay no word that I have spoken about it. But all this fades away before the spectacle which is now unfolding. . . . I see the Russian soldiers . . . guarding their homes where mothers and wives pray—ah, yes, for there are times when all pray—for the safety of their loved ones, the return of the breadwinner, of their champion, of their protector. I see the ten thousand villages of Russia where the means of existence is wrung so hardly from the soil, but where there are still primordial human joys, where maidens laugh and children play. I see advancing upon all this in hideous onslaught the Nazi war machine . . . the dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun soldiery plodding on like a swarm of crawling locusts.

Mothers, wives, maidens, children, when before it used to be the Asiatic tyranny of Bolshevism! Hitler, hearing this, might well have exclaimed: Oh, perfidious Albion!

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I have called Churchill an anachronism, though very often he is that consciously, and antiquarian would seem to be the juster term. His antiquarianism sometimes expresses itself in odd ways. When Churchill first came to write to Stalin, casting about for a suitable mode of address (for Stalin then held no official post in the Soviet Government), he fell back upon the language of the old diplomacy and called him Monsieur. Monsieur Stalin is something of a shock at first, but in the end one finds it charming and even appropriate in the pages of his present work. For it is entirely in this Old World spirit that his account of the Second World War is written, to which the outmoded eloquence of Churchill's Gibbonian periods is perfectly suited. Here history exists in its antique form of men and deeds and nothing more; here history is human wisdom and folly—there are no "forces," no "laws" of history dictating the "inevitable." When Roosevelt was seeking a name for the Second World War, Churchill promptly suggested "The Unnecessary War." The cause of the Allies he calls, with deliberate unsophistication, the "Righteous Cause," turning his back on anything smacking of such modern notions as democracy and totalitarianism. The theme of the first volume, he devotes a separate page to announcing, is "how the English-speaking peoples, through their unwisdom, carelessness, and good nature allowed the wicked to rearm." Hitler is "wicked," "evil," "that bad man."

Churchill properly disclaims the name of history for his work and calls it merely a "contribution." Only the first volume, which is also the best one that has so far appeared, is worked up into anything like history. The succeeding volumes tend more and more to become a series of documents connected by a few lines of text. As a military and especially a naval historian Churchill is at his best (we knew this long ago from *The World Crisis*). Such set pieces as the descriptions of the hunting down of the *Graf Spee* and of the chase of the *Bismarck* constitute some of the finest writing in the work. But the principal interest of these volumes is as memoirs, which is what of course they really are—the method he has followed, Churchill tells us, is that of Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier,* "in which the author hangs the chronicle and discussion of great military and political events upon the thread of the personal experiences of an individual."

It is already becoming rare for politicians to be able to write their memoirs (or even to have any), for this implies a degree of cultivation that they less and less possess; what passes for memoirs these days are hodgepodges of journalistic "revelations" and gossip. In this country we can see how the whole tendency of modern, "mass" politics is to

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make impersonal instruments of its practitioners, technicians who can ill afford to seek to realize their personalities in their work. Their duty, in the radical democracy of America (they know only too well), is to represent the general will and not themselves. There is no place in Congress, as there is apparently less and less place in Parliament, for a man who looks on public life in the old-fashioned way as a means for expressing his entire self. In the United States we should have made a kind of Bernard Baruch out of Churchill, a darling of *The New York Times*. Even Franklin Roosevelt, thought to have been something of an aristocrat, in addition to his will scarcely expressed more than his personal charm in politics, the rest of the man either lying unused or suppressed as a political liability until the cocktail hour. In Churchill the soldier, statesman, and author something of the Renaissance and English aristocratic tradition of the complete man is still alive. His amateur painting is not, as has been said, the hobby of the bourgeois relaxing after office hours (though that is how Churchill speaks of it), on a par with Roosevelt's collecting of stamps, but is an expression of this tradition of broad personal cultivation.

Churchill is neither a mountebank nor a stuffed shirt, but a person, and in a time when programs, forces, and movements so preponderate and statesmen are turned into abstractions, it is like an echo from the heroic past to come upon a man whose purely personal qualities at the same time constitute his public "program" and historical significance. Again we must turn back to the autobiography for a clear statement of the Churchillian program:

> . . . I must confess that all through my life I have found myself in disagreement alternately with both the historic English parties. I have always urged fighting wars and other contentions with might and main till overwhelming victory, and then offering the hand of friendship to the vanquished. Thus I have always been against the Pacifists during the quarrel, and against the Jingoes at its close. . . . And not only in South Africa. I thought we ought to have starved out the Germans, and then revictualled their country; and that after smashing the General Strike, we should have met the grievances of the miners. I always get into trouble because so few people take this line. I was once asked to devise an inscription for a monument in France. I wrote, "In war, Resolution. In defeat, Defiance. In victory, Magnanimity. In peace, Goodwill." The inscription was not accepted.

What we have here are sentiments which are highly personal and concrete and directly mirror the man, rather than principles (such as we find in Wilson's program, for example) which are abstract. The inscription that was not accepted for the monument in France now

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serves as the "moral" of Churchill's present work and represents the sum of his political wisdom. The magnanimity and good will that he counsels in victory and peace Churchill has never been able to practice, never having held the highest office in peacetime. But his resolution and defiance in war and defeat are a familiar tale, and these very personal qualities have directly shaped the course of history. I do not wish to make much of what journalists have already made so much of, but it is well to remember all the nonsense that was being talked, just before the war, both on the Left and on the Right, in *Partisan Review* and in T. S. Eliot's *Idea of a Christian Society,* about the superior dynamism, the more positive (even though pagan) culture of Fascism, which only socialism or only Christianity could defeat. In the end, however, "bourgeois democracy" (or "liberalism," in Eliot's word) utterly triumphed over its more "dynamic" and "positive" foe, thanks in no small measure to the great energy (dynamism) and resolution of Churchill, and defeatist intellectuals have long since had to swallow their opinions in confusion.

In one of his speeches Churchill quotes with approval Disraeli's Burkian maxim, "Nations are ruled by force or by tradition." What this really means is: "Other nations are ruled by force, and England by tradition." Englishmen have watched with contemptuous indifference the rule of force in other countries, while standing jealous guard over their own traditional island liberties. Thus Churchill, with a light-mindedness he would never be guilty of in home matters, accepts the Moscow Trials as just, not according to English standards, of course, but "according to the standards maintained in a totalitarian state."[3] The English Revolution, unlike the French and American Revolutions which it preceded by a century, never wore a universal aspect, and English liberty, remaining peculiarly English, though it has been an example to the world, has never been an inspiration. Burke put the

3. He writes of the service Benes did Stalin passing on to him information that the Czechoslovak president possessed of communications "passing through the Soviet Embassy in Prague between important personages in Russia and the German Government. This was part of the so-called military and Old-Guard Communist conspiracy to overthrow Stalin and introduce a new regime based on a pro-German policy. . . . Thereafter there followed the merciless, but perhaps not needless, military and political purge in Soviet Russia, and the series of trials in January, 1937, in which Vyshinsky, the Public Prosecutor, played so masterful a part." But in a footnote Churchill is obliged to add: "There is, however, some evidence that Benes' information had previously been imparted to the Czech police by the Ogpu, who wished it to reach Stalin from a friendly foreign source."

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matter very plainly in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*:

> You will observe, that from Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; *as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right.* [My italics.]

In the two world wars of the present century England donned with some awkwardness the mantle of Defender of Universal Freedom, being relieved of it in each instance by the accession of America to the conflict, that New World which the Old regarded, at least until a short time ago, as enshrining the Idea of Democracy in its most untarnished and universal form.[4] As Wilson's moral authority in the world at large overshadowed Lloyd George's, the American becoming the moral spokesman of the Allies, so Roosevelt's overshadowed Churchill's. Although the Tory Democrat claims, not without a touch of pique, the honor of having composed the first draft of that Atlantic Charter which looked forward to a peace affording "assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want";[5] and although Pearl Harbor might have been thought to have transformed what was in England's case, strategically as well as morally, a war of survival, into an Allied crusade against Nazi tyranny; yet for Churchill it remained "The Unnecessary War" which he was thankful that Great Britain and the Commonwealth should have come out of whole. Where a Frenchman of the old style, or an American, in a like situation, would have seen the fate of the universal, Liberty, inextricably involved in the fate of his own country, Churchill sees nothing of the sort, or at most sees it only as a secondary and relatively weak consideration. It is for the preservation of English particularity, of England's unique history, of "the long continuity of our island tale," that his strongest emotions are reserved:

> No American will think it wrong of me if I proclaim that to have the United States at our side was to me the greatest joy. . . . So we had

4. The New World as a political and moral idea dates almost from the time of America's discovery. This ancient tradition, however, is dying before our eyes, and the European working class, full of socialist prepossession and self-righteousness, now looks with suspicion on the "Land of Wall Street," the standard of living of whose proletariat, if the European workers were to possess it, would be socialism enough for them.

5. "Considering all the tales of my reactionary, Old-World outlook, and the pain this is said to have caused the President, I am glad it should be on record that the substance and spirit of what came to be called the 'Atlantic Charter' was in its first draft a British production cast in my own words."

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won after all! . . . England would live; Britain would live; the Commonwealth of Nations and the Empire would live. . . . Once again in our long Island history we should emerge, however mauled or mutilated, safe and victorious. We should not be wiped out. Our history would not come to an end.

This indifference of Churchill's to identifying the particular cause of his country with "any other more general or prior right," though it makes for an absence of cant, is insularity. If we find this insular attitude to be deficient morally, it had the advantage of being more realistic politically. Churchill regarded the Grand Alliance of the Second World War, not as a union for the defense of certain general principles, but as a temporary coalition of otherwise divergent and even hostile interests against a common enemy. This, it is now needless to say, was a juster appreciation of the real state of affairs, and had his view prevailed this country might have been spared many of its present troubles.

But in calling Churchill insular I do not mean to imply that he is any way the narrow and provincial Tory of caricature. Here again he wears his Toryism with a difference and, though no cosmopolitan and internationalist, rises superior to the ordinary British benightedness; as when, writing in *The World Crisis* of the French General Nivelle's meeting with the London War Cabinet in 1917, he wittily comments:

His success was immediate. The British Ministers had never before met in Council a general who could express himself in forceful and continuous argument, and they had never before met a French general whom they could understand. Nivelle not only spoke lucidly, he spoke English. He had not only captured Fort Douaumont, but had an English mother.

The much-maligned Dardanelles campaign of which he was so enthusiastic an advocate in the First World War, without having the authority to insure its proper execution, was an attempt to transcend that parochial strategy which regarded the Western Front as the sole and exclusive area of decision, with its vain offensives, prodigious slaughter, and military stalemate, and to wage the world war with a worldwide strategy. And today we can see how the unenlightened imperialist is a better champion of European federation than the pettifogging and provincial trade-union officials and social workers of the Labor Party, in whom the insular spirit has completely triumphed over the internationalist tradition of socialism.

On the last page of the first volume, at the point in his narrative

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where the Battle of France begins and the author becomes Prime Minister, he writes, with some bitterness:

Thus, then, on the night of the tenth of May 1940, at the outset of this mighty battle, I acquired the chief power in the State, which henceforth I wielded in ever-growing measure for five years and three months of world war, at the end of which time, all our enemies having surrendered unconditionally or being about to do so, I was immediately dismissed by the British electorate from all further conduct of their affairs.

Very early in the same volume, in commenting on the "discarding" of Clemenceau by the French at the end of the previous war, Churchill quotes Plutarch, who said: "Ingratitude toward their great men is the mark of strong peoples." Undoubtedly it is with some such thought as this that Churchill must console himself for his dismissal. But Plutarch's saying, which contains a truth, needs to be interpreted, for gratitude and ingratitude are meaningless terms when applied to such broad political phenomena as the British elections of 1945. Not ingratitude, but a refusal to allow their great men to impose themselves upon them, or to turn them away from their intended course, is the mark of strong peoples. It bespeaks the high political development of the British people, that aptitude for politics which no other nation in history can equal, that, at the very moment when all Churchill's great efforts were crowned with success, they should have turned him out of office, not in a fit of vagariousness, but on well-considered grounds. In dismissing Churchill the British electorate sought to leave behind that brilliant past which he so consciously embodies, but which was as iniquitous as it was brilliant. In renouncing that past much, no doubt, is lost. As Churchill himself has said, "The leadership of the privileged has passed away; but it has not been succeeded by that of the eminent"; and on the other hand how eminent so many of the privileged were. Yet the England of the very few, that England with which Churchill willy-nilly is identified and which he espouses and disowns at the same time, had to go. One must admire in Churchill "a sort of native plainness and directness of understanding" which Burke spoke of as characterizing "those men who have successively obtained authority" among the English. Yet politics is not only a practical activity calling for a rugged common sense. It has a moral side as well—this needs no emphasis today—and requires the lively sense of justice that common sense has always been prone to dismiss as visionary.

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THE MORNING WATCH

(*Continued from page 166*)

tion of Thy Son Jesus Christ through the message of an Angel: Lee came silently to the middle and genuflected; then from where he stood, shifting the extinguishing cone in exact rhythm, he put out seven shrunken candles to the left and seven to the right. He genuflected again, and leaned the tall snuffer into the corner, and returned, and genuflected; then strode to the Altar in a quiet and mastering way, reached delicately among the interlocked flowers, and uprooted with each hand a smoking seven-branched candlestick. He genuflected once again and tiptoed out, shutting the door to softly with one shoe. Smoke crinkled from each dark candle as he went. There seemed to be scarcely fewer candles than before, there were so many. There would be others to change, five on each side, the rest were still tall enough. Through the message of an Angel, so by His Cross and Passion: He heard behind him the prudent raising of a window, and for the first time realized how suffocatingly hot it was, and that he was sweating. The sacristy door opened and there was George Fitzgerald. His eyes were softer and brighter with tiredness than before and his face was white and bright red in patches. He met Richard's eyes quietly and impersonally. He came to the middle and genuflected, and Richard could see that he was looking at all the flowers before he moved. Some still had strength and some were dying, and now he took two vases of those which were dying, unmeshing them with great care from among the others, and genuflected, and tiptoed out, shutting the door to softly with his shoe. Petals flaked away as he went. The living air touched the back of Richard's neck; now it even cooled his forehead; and now, rank on rank, the flames of the candles acknowledged the invading night; more petals fell. Upon the fragrance of fire and wax and fresh and dying flowers there stole the purity of water from a spring. Snaffling it desperately in an inept hand, somebody sneezed. Claude tilted his head back the first way and started his beads all over again. Richard heard the sound of bare feet withdrawing and knew that it must be Hobe and Jimmy. I haven't even said my prayers, he realized. I'm going to stay, he told himself. Give up your place, he told himself. You got no business hogging it. As much business as: you got no business thinking that either: as Claude with his head on one side and those beads. Give up your place. Come back. Kneel on the floor. The same person sneezed, more violently but better stifled. Claude, straightening his head, laid his beads down carefully, got up, stepped to the middle, genuflected, turned, looking like St. Sebastian, and went to the rear of

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the Chapel. Richard heard his careful sliding-shut of the window; the flames stood straight; Claude returned, and again began his beads at the beginning. Soul of Christ sanctify me, Richard began aimlessly; the sacristy door opened and there was Lee Allen.

Richard shut his eyes. O God forgive me that I can't do it right, he prayed. O God help me do it better now. Make me to love Thee and to know Thy suffering this day. For Jesus' sake Amen. He crossed himself meticulously and got to his feet; he was dizzy and for a moment his knees hurt very badly. He stepped out of the desk, genuflected, and turned, and all of a sudden he knew he would have to go out at least for a minute or two, he was much too tired to stay. When he turned to genuflect again at the door, Lee was lighting the second of the tall new candles.

The darkness was cool and stale. From where he stood beside the door of the Lady Chapel, looking back across the nave, he saw the spaced badges of blacker darkness where the Stations of the Cross hung veiled. Tall at his right shoulder, a Madonna stood, a blind black monolith. He walked silently toward the middle of the transept, and now he could see the white stops and keys of the organ. He stood at the center, facing the stripped Altar; sure that it ought not to be done, but in an obstinate and loyal reverence, he put down one knee and then both knees before the desolate shrine: until His coming again.

He bent his head deep toward the floor and heard his voice whisper slowly and fearfully within him the words which, he suspected, only a priest may utter without blasphemy: For in the night in which He was betrayed:

His skin crawled.

This is the night in which He is betrayed.

He felt the floor, bitter against his knees, and whispered aloud, "This is the night in which He is betrayed"; and with the whispering it no longer was, and he whispered within himself, He took bread, and brake it, and gave it unto His disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my Body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

He saw, and was himself, grown and vested, genuflecting, raising the consecrated Host, again genuflecting, while a bowed kneeling boy, who was also himself, shook the three bells.

Likewise after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks he blessed it, and gave it unto his disciples, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.

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And with the words For this is my Blood of the New Testament, he knelt so deep in burden of blood that no priestly image entered him, and whispered again, Which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. And slowly one by one, while his hands lifted, the words stood up within his silence.

O Thou Lord God my Saviour: ("my Saviour," he whispered): Look down on this Thy child.

Lord bless (he tried); O Lord lift up (he tried); O Lord forgive Thy child.

He could just see the empty Altar. There were no more words.

Do this as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.

No more.

"Look down on this Thy child," he whispered aloud.

Now his knees hurt very badly.

"For Jesus' sake Amen," he whispered, crossing his breastbone with his thumb. He stood up.

If he went into the vestry they would say, What you doing up? They would tell him to get on back to bed. Not mean about it because of the night it was but they would tell him all the same. Because it was the rule. Or maybe they wouldn't but if they did and he didn't go on back to bed it would be even worse than if they hadn't seen him. "I told him Father," he heard Lee Allen say in his serious hollow voice. "That's right Father," George Fitzgerald said, nodding soberly. And that was always worse when somebody had told you; Prefects. "What did you stay out for then?" "I dunno Father." "Course you know. Why did you stay out? Why did all of you stay out, Toole? You heard me tell you all to come straight back to bed." Where were they? He was suddenly scared. If they had gone back it would be even worse for him if he didn't go back too. "Where's Richard?" "I dunno Father." "Course you know, you all went together. Where is he?" "Honest Father *I* dunno. Last I seen him he was still in Lady Chapel." That ought to make it all right. Still in Lady Chapel. He was late but it was because he was praying. Can't whip anybody for that. "You know what the rule is." No. He'd say that to him, not them, him, at Council Meeting; they'd come back in time. "You know what I told you: come right on back to bed." "But I was staying a second watch Father. Ask Lee. Ask George if I wasn't" "I don't care what you were doing. I told you to come straight back to bed and you didn't do any such thing. Now what have you got to say for yourself?" Or no, maybe he would look embarrassed and just mutter something about You see to it you do what

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you're told, and not punish him. Or no he would maybe look mad when he heard that about the second watch and say, "And you dare to use *that* for an excuse?" And yet the year before he had stayed a second watch and there had not been any trouble. But that year nobody had told him to come right on back to bed. That was the year three of the boys had never even showed up for the watch they signed for but went over to Lost Cove and got some whiskey.

If they'd gone on back he was in trouble already.

Breathing light, and the breathing shaken by his heart, with the greatest possible stealth he approached the vestry door and, stiffening beside the frame like an Indian scout, spied slopewise between the door and the jamb. George was carefully arranging wild azaleas in a Karo bucket. Lee was not there. Hobe squatted against the wall; Richard could see only his cheek, brown-orange in the light of the fiery mount of wax, which had grown much larger. Willard hung out all over the folding-chair; the quietly snoring head lay back and the blue chin was the highest part of it. Jimmy sat on the floor between his thighs; he looked very sleepy. Lee Allen came quickly out of the back passage at the far end and he seemed to look straight at Richard and Richard flinched away and froze, but it was clear by Lee's voice that he had not actually seen him. "Ought to wake up Burgy and send these kids to bed," he said. "They aren't doing any harm," George said. "*I* don't keer," Lee said, "but I don't want to get in no trouble either, you know what they told us." George said nothing for a little while and then he said, "Me neither," and after a while he said, "I don't want you to get in trouble, count of me, Lee. You send them out if you want to. Don't let me hinder you." After thinking, Lee said, "Nobody hindern me." After a little he said, "Where's Sockertees?" which was one of Richard's nicknames, and Richard felt his breathing go thin. And Hobe said, exactly as Richard had fore-heard him, "Last I seen him he was still in Lady Chapel." "Well he ain't there now," Lee said. "Probly went on back to bed," George said. "No," he reflected, "we'd a heard him go out." "Crazy kid," Lee said. Richard tried to be sure whether this was said in affection or dislike, but so far as he could see it was neither, just an indifferent statement of fact. Dislike would almost have been better; and now he knew that he could not go in, right after Lee's saying that, and that although he felt very lonely, and suddenly wanted very much to be in there with them where no fuss was being made about not going to bed, he wanted still more not to be anywhere near them or anywhere near anybody. Crazy kid: crazy kid; yet he could

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not go away, for they might say more about him. He could hear George saying, "Oh, he's a good kid" or even just "Oh, he's all right," and it made everything much better, he could almost have gone in; but George didn't say anything of the kind, or anything at all, he just seemed to accept it as a fact everybody knew; and after a little Lee said, "I got to thin out them candles some if they're goana last through"; and George did not answer, and Lee said, "I thought there was a whole box more of them," and George said, "Not that I know of": and Lee did not answer, and George said, "If you thin out the candles some maybe it'll give the flowers a chance, anyhow. I sure do hate to see dead flowers"; and suddenly, frightened because he was spying, Richard shrank as small against the wall as he could, for someone had come out of the Lady Chapel and now he could make out that it was Claude and realized thankfully, He sleeps in St. Joseph's, he'll go out the front. And sure enough Claude came to the middle as if to bow or genuflect and stood there a moment and then tossed his head upward to one side in a peculiar, saucy way, and turned his back on the Altar and walked back up the middle aisle and through the vestibule door; and after a moment Richard could hear the outside door; and then nothing; and after his breathing was quiet again, he crossed the transept without pausing to bow, and went back into the Lady Chapel.

The prayer-desks were all taken; he knelt at the rear on the bare floor and crossed himself, and closed his eyes, and bowed his head. Lord make my mind not to wander, he prayed, successfully driving from his mind Claude's impudent head. This is the last chance, he told himself. By leaning a little he could just see the clock. Already it was nearly quarter of. He felt fury against himself and subdued it, for it was evil. God be merciful unto me a sinner, he prayed, shutting his eyes again.

He waited carefully with his eyes closed but nothing came to him except his emptiness of soul and the pain of his knees and of his back. Hail Mary, he whispered to himself, and went through the prayer twice. He repeated five more Hail Marys rather rapidly and then three very slowly, trying to allow each word its full weight, and still there was nothing, not even through the words Pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death. What's wrong with me, he wondered. He kept his eyes shut. Perhaps exactly because he had given his knees a rest, they now hurt worse than ever. Or it was because they were now on the flat floor, instead of braced against the edge of a board. The grooves where they had been against the board hurt badly, the bones just

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below the kneecaps hurt even worse. And within another minute or so, the small of his back ached worse than it had before. He bent over a little, and though that hurt his back in a new way, it also gave it a sort of rest. He let himself slacken down so that his buttocks sat on his heels, and that at least changed the pressure on the bones of his knees. He leaned forward so that his chest almost rested against his knees, and that helped his back. It'll just look like at Adoration, he reflected; and was ashamed of his hypocrisy. All the same, he thought, if it'll help me pray. Hail Mary, he prayed again. But still there was nothing. His heart was empty and his mind was idle, and he could not forget his discomfort.

He opened his eyes and looked around for a kneeling-pad and he saw one, skated against the baseboard, ahead of him and across the Chapel. He would have to get up and go in front of Julian to get it, and Julian was not using one. He hasn't been kneeling as long as I have, he reflected. What of it. He'll think I came in late. Just now. What of it. But the more he thought about it the more clearly he decided he would not go over and get the pad. If I can't say my prayers right, he told himself, why anyhow I can do this. He felt proudly and calmly vindictive against himself. Closely attentive to everything he was doing, he raised himself straight onto his knees and he straightened his spine so that his knees and the small of his back should hurt as much as possible, and he put the heels of his hands together, the fingers extended, edge to edge, tips touching, and the right thumb crossed over the left, as he had been taught when he was learning to be an acolyte. Ordinarily this strange and careful position of the hands embarrassed him, for it seemed sissy. Only a few of the servers kept to it; most of them, like Richard, simply folded their hands, and so did most of the priests; but now it seemed no more sissy than being on your knees in the first place. It was just the right way to hold your hands to pray, that was all. For all the aching in his knees and his back he was now even more clearly aware of his hands in this unaccustomed position, the palps of the fingers touching so lightly and competently, the locked thumbs, the cleanly hollow of shaded light within the palms; his hands felt full of goodness and quiet and they made him think of pictures of Cathedrals.

He tried to breathe so quietly that he could not feel his chest go in and out or even any air moving in his nostrils, and he gazed studiously at the monstrance, visualizing through the veil the spangling sunlike gold and the white center, and upon that center Christ Crucified, Whom he saw first in metal and then in wood and then in flesh; but he began to wonder whether these efforts at visualization were not mere

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tricks and temptations of emptiness, for still he was empty of prayer and of feeling. Now that he forbade himself images and dwelt within the discipline of his body his knees and his back began to hurt worse than ever and he began to think with quiet and increasing amazement of young men, boys really, hardly older than he was, not much older than George anyway, who knelt like this on Chapel stone the whole night through in prayer and vigil, their weapons and armor blessed and waiting, soberly shining in the lambent gloom, before the Mass and the Communion and before that greatest moment of their lives when their King touched the flat of the sword to the shoulder and the young man stood up and was assisted in putting upon himself the whole armor of God and rode forth into the glittering meadows of daybreak for the first time a knight, a knight errant, seeking whatever wrong God might send him to set right, whatever tests of bravery and chastity the huge world might hold in ambush for him. O but I can do better than this, he exclaimed to himself in self-contempt; and he thought with envy and reverence of the early time which had belonged to those shining young men, and he pressed down with all his strength and weight, first on one knee and then on the other, so that it was hard not to cry out, and he held his back still more rigidly upright, and he was pleased to find that now, by the way he held his hands out, even his arms ached, deep into the shoulders.

But it's so little to do! he thought, imagining the first, living Crucifix; and he did his best to imagine one hand, against splintery wood, and the point of a spike against the center of the open hand, and a great hammer, and the spike being driven through, breaking a bone, tight into the wood so that the head was all buried in the flesh and the splintered bone, and then to be able to say, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do.* And that's just one hand, he reminded himself. How about both hands. And both feet. Specially both feet crossed on each other and one spike through both insteps. How about when they raise up the Cross with you on it and drop it deep into the hole they dug for it! And imagining that moment he felt a tearing spasm of anguish in the center of each palm and with an instant dazzling of amazed delight, remembering pictures of great saints, shouted within himself, *I've got the Wounds!* and even as he caught himself opening his palms and his eyes to peer and see if this were so he realized that once again this night, and even more blasphemously and absurdly than before, he had sinned in the proud imagination of his heart. *O my God,* his heart moaned, *O my God! My God how can You forgive me!* I'll have to confess it, he realized. I can't. Not this. How can I confess *this!*

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The thing he had most dreaded to confess before, an impure act which in its elaborateness had seemed merely the more exciting in the doing and which was so nearly unbearable to specify to another, and a priest at that, that he had gravely considered the risk to his soul of merely generalizing it: beside this new enormity—and twice over in one night, and both times in the Presence—beside this, that ugly and humiliating lustfulness seemed almost easy to tell of. But I'll tell it all the same, he told himself grimly. Because if I don't I'm in mortal sin. No I'll tell it because I did it and I hate to so much, and I don't care who it is I have to tell it to either, I won't dodge whoever it turns out to be and wait for another, not even if it's Father McPhetridge. I'll tell the whole thing just the way it happened—way I thought it happened, that is. I'll tell it all right. Because I've got to.

He looked proudly at the monstrance and felt strength and well-being stand up straight inside him, and self-esteem as well; for it began to occur to him that not many people would even know this for the terrible sin it was, or would feel a contrition so deep, or would have the courage truly and fully, in all of its awful shamefulness, to confess it: and again the strength and the self-esteem fell from him and he was aghast in the knowledge that still again in this pride and complacency he had sinned and must still again confess; and again that in recognizing this newest sin as swiftly as it arose, and in repenting it and determining to confess it as well, he had in a sense balanced the offense and restored his well-being and his self-esteem; and again in that there was evil, and again in the repenting of it there was good and evil as well, until it began to seem as if he were tempted into eternal wrong by rightness itself or even the mere desire for rightness and as if he were trapped between them, good and evil, as if they were mirrors laid face to face as he had often wished he could see mirrors, truly reflecting and extending each other forever upon the darkness their meeting, their facing, created, and he in the dark middle between them, and there was no true good and no true safety in any effort he might ever make to realize or repent a wrong but only a new temptation which his very soul itself seemed powerless to resist; for was not this sense of peace, of strength, of well-being, itself a sin? yet how else could a forgiven or forgivable soul possibly feel, or a soul in true contrition or self-punishment? I'm a fool to even try, he groaned to himself, and he felt contempt for every moment of well-being he could recall, which had come of the goodness of a thought or word or deed. *Everything* goes wrong, he realized. Everything anyone can ever do for himself goes wrong. Only His Mercy. That's what He died for. That's what He's dying for today. Only His Mercy can be any help. Nothing anyone

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can do but pray. O God, he prayed, be *merciful* unto *me,* a *sinner.* Let me not feel good when I am good. *If* I am good. Let me just try to be good, don't let me *feel* good. Don't let me even *know* if I'm good. Just let me try. And in this humility, aware that it was of a true and pure kind which was new to him, he felt a flash of relief, well-being, pride: and tightening his shut eyes, cried out in despair within himself, *There it is again! O God make it go away. Make it not mean anything. O God what I can't help, please forgive it.* He wanted to put himself down on his face on the floor. *"All my trust I put in Thee,"* he whispered aloud and, aware that he had whispered aloud, opened his eyes in the fear that he had been noticed. Nobody seemed to have noticed. Now Jimmy and Hobe were kneeling a little ahead of him. He found that he was drenched with sweat and as short of breath as if he had been running. He felt weak and quiet. The burden of them is intolerable. He could feel the words sincerely and quietly now yet at the same time they meant nothing to him. All my trust I put in Thee, he repeated silently. O let me not fail Thee.

Tonight.

This very night.

For in the night in which He was betrayed.

Now fragments of his first moment awake returned but now they were dry and tired like dead leaves, as dry and tired as he was. He tried to realize what it all meant. But all that he could realize was dry and tired like the tired dry fire of the candles.

He came into the world to be with us and save us, and this is what happened. This is what it all came to.

The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.

He came unto His own and His own received Him not.

So there He was just sitting there waiting. Just waiting to die.

Words stirred and stood up inside him which lifted his heart: But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.

And the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us:

He closed his eyes and bowed his head.

Flesh.

All for us.

All his suffering for all of us.

He remembered the terrible thing his uncle had said: "Well who *asked* him to die for me? *I* didn't. He needn't try and collect on the debt," he had said, "because there's no debt, far's I'm concerned."

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Nearly always when he thought of this Richard was shocked almost into awe of such blasphemy; and some few times when some priest or his mother was insisting what we all owe Jesus he had been tempted to wonder, wasn't it maybe really so, for it was a fact; Jesus had done it without anybody asking Him to: but now it seemed neither blasphemous nor persuasive but only empty and idle and cruel and as he thought of it he could see the man of whom it had been said, sitting very quietly on a stool or maybe a bench among the iron-breasted helmeted soldiers while they hit him and spat in his face and mocked him. Nobody could come near him or help him or even speak a word of love or thanks or comfort to him now. He could see him only as if he spied down on what was happening through a cellar window and it would be torture and death to dare to even try to get in, and no use could come of it, even if he did. The way, maybe, Peter had stayed. All of Peter's betraying and cowardliness was over and done with now. Nothing could ever wipe out for him what he had done. He wasn't even crying any more because he couldn't even cry any more. He was just hiding around on the outskirts, spying through the window. He was afraid to show himself and he couldn't stand to go away. He must wish he was dead.

Judas, by now, had he hanged himself? Richard couldn't remember for sure when. But if he hadn't yet, that was all there was left for him to do. That was all he was thinking about all the rest of this night, all that was left of his life. I want to die. O I want to be dead. I can't be dead soon enough to suit me. Judas didn't feel contrition, Father Weiler said, he felt remorse. Probably he couldn't cry like Peter. Just terrible cold remorse, as cold and bitter as the sound of the word. Remorse is very different from contrition; a deadly sin. A mortal sin is a sin that cuts us off from God. With remorse you don't feel sorry like contrition, you feel, well you just feel remorse, that's all.

These were just the dead hours. The hours between. They must be the worst hours of all for Jesus and for everyone who loved Him. No more doubt now. No more praying to God the Father, if this Cup can be taken from me: that's over long ago. It can't. That's all. No more judgment, standing trial, answering fool questions. He's already been sentenced to die. He belongs to the Law. Now just the time between. So tired. No sleep all this night. Waiting, getting Himself ready inside, while they mock and sneer and holler at him, and spit in his face, and crown him with thorns, and put the reed in his hand for a scepter, just waiting through the rest of the long night, just getting ready to die, while the night slowly turns into morning, and it's the last morning of all. To suffer so he will cry out, *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* And then die. *It is finished.* And then die. And meekly

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bowing down His head, He gave up the ghost. And then (Richard could remember in advance) the stunned and strange peacefulness, throughout that afternoon and night and through all the next day, and the quiet, almost secret lighting of the tremendous candle in the beginning of the dusk of Holy Saturday, everything still going as if on tiptoe, and then in the first light of morning, the stillest and most wonderful moment of the year, the quietly spoken and simple Mass: "He is risen." And then the rich midmorning and the blinding blaze of Easter. *'Tis the Spring of Souls today, Christ hath burst His prison, and from three days' sleep in Death, like a Sun hath risen.*

But not yet. That is still not known though at the same time it *is* known. We are all in most solemn sorrow and grief and mourning. We know a secret far inside ourselves but we don't dare tell it, even to ourselves. We don't dare to quite believe it will ever really happen again until it really happens again. Until His coming again. For in the night in which He was betrayed. It has happened over nineteen hundred times now and yet it has never happened before. Not yet. And we don't know if it ever can. Never dreamed it could. Can.

Not yet. Now is just the dead time between and he is waiting. This is his last night and his last daybreak begins soon now. Before this day is over he will be dead.

My Jesus, he whispered, clasping his hands strongly; his throat contracted.

O Savior of the World Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redee——

O you are dying my dear Lord for me, his soul whispered, wondering, weeping. For *me,* and I can't do anything for you. I can't even comfort you, or speak to you, or thank you. O my Lord Jesus I can thank you. I can think about you. I can try to know what it is you are going through for me. For me and for all sinners. I can know that every sin I do big or no matter how little is a thorn or a nail or the blow of the hammer or even just a fly that teases and hurts you in your blood, crawling and tickling and sipping and eating at you in the hot day on the Cross with you unable to brush him away or even to move, and every good thing, or true thankfulness or thought of love must make it anyway a little less terrible to suffer. My Lord I Love Thee. My Lord I grieve for Thee. My dear Lord I adore Thee. My poor Lord I wish I could suffer for Thee. My Lord I thank Thee. Lord have mercy upon me. Christ have mercy upon me. Lord have mercy upon me.

He opened his eyes in quiet wonder. It was indeed to him the very day. Not just a day in remembrance, but the day. There stood his consecrated Body, veiled among fire and flowers, but also living, in the

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flesh, on this very morning, at this very moment, He was waiting; and He was now within His last hours.

He won't see the sun go down today.

He looked at all the lights, spearing, aspiring, among the dying flowers. Knobbled and fluted with their own spillings, the candles stood like sheaves; some, bent by the heat, bowed over like winter saplings. Almost all the flowers hung their exhausted faces. They were so shrunken and disheveled now that he could see clearly among them the many shapes and sizes of the vessels which held them, the professional vases and ewers and jars, and the tumblers and tin cans from the poor cabins out the Mountain. He could just hear the clock. Tonight, he whispered, watching that devastation. That night. This minute. He leaned, and looked at the clock. It was one minute after five. Something troubled him which he had done or had left undone, some failure of the soul or default of the heart which he could not quite remember or was it perhaps foresee; he was empty and idle, in some way he had failed. Yet he was also filled to overflowing with a reverent and marveling peace and thankfulness. My cup runneth over, something whispered within him, yet what he saw in his mind's eye was a dry chalice, an empty Grail. No more I could do, he reflected, if I stayed all night. No more. No use: and he continued merely to look without thought at the emblazoned ruin. "Good-by," something whispered from incalculably deep within him. *O good-by, good-by,* his heart replied. A strange and happy sorrow filled him. *It is finished,* his soul whispered. He looked at the humbled backs ahead of him and prayed: The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be amongst us and remain with us always.

He opened his eyes; and it was all as it was before. Of course it was. He was light and uneasy and at peace within. There was nothing to do or think or say.

He signed himself carefully with the Cross, got up, genuflected, and left the Chapel; just inside the north door, he took off his shoes. Hobe and Jimmy came up behind him and they took off their shoes too.

III

They walked down the sandstone steps into an air so different from the striving candles and the expiring flowers that they were stopped flatfooted on the gravel. Morning had not yet begun but

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the night was nearly over. The gravel took all the light there was in the perishing darkness and shed it upward, and in the darkness among the trees below the outbuildings a blossoming dogwood flawed like winter breath. In the untouchable silence such a wave of energy swept upward through their bare feet and their three bodies into the sky that they were shaken as if a ghost had touched them. Sharply and almost silently, Hobe laughed.

They looked at the last tired stars and at the dark windows of their dormitory and they wondered what their punishment would be.

"S——t fahr," Hobe said. "Can't even pray, what the f——k *kin* ye do!"

Maybe, Richard reflected, they wouldn't say anything. Couldn't be a better excuse than praying. In brainless exaltation he flexed the soles of his feet against the ground. What of it if they do, he thought.

Rustily, so far down back of them across the fields they could scarcely hear him, a rooster crowed.

"Let's get the rackets," Richard said.

They took it as naturally as if one of them had said it.

"They'd catch us sure," Jimmy said.

"Hell we keer," Hobe said. "Tan our asses anyhow, now."

Creakily, a little nearer, but very faint, a second rooster answered.

Might not, Richard thought; not *anyhow*. What if they do.

"Let's go to the Sand Cut," Hobe said.

"Freeze yer balls off," Jimmy said.

"Sun-up, time we git thur," Hobe said.

Proud, fierce behind the cook's house, the cry of a third rooster shining sprang, speared, vibrated as gaily and teasingly in the centers of their flesh as a jews-harp.

"Come on," Richard said, and started walking rapidly across the pale gravel.

He was surprised that he had spoken and the more surprised to hear them following. How they do it, he thought, stepping along not quite steadily in silent uneasy elation; all there is to it. He led them down past the cook's house.

Pride, he realized; a mortal sin. How do I confess that?

Through the veering wire net he saw, black in the faintness, how the big rooster darted his vigilant head and shuffled his plumage: in the silence before daylight a priest, vesting himself for Mass. Something heavy struck and the whole body splayed, and chuckled with terror; the coward's wives gabbled along their roost.

Richard felt as if he had been hit in the stomach.

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I'm scared of both of them, he reflected, specially Hobe, and they know it whenever they want to.

And bigger than either of them, he forced himself to recognize.

Younger. Big for his age that's why I'm clumsy and soft.

Bigger all the same.

Maybe that makes up for the Pride, he thought, as they walked past the bruising foulness of the backhouse.

Privately, safe ahead of them, he struck his breast.

Nothing makes up for anything. Confess you thought it did.

He tried to imagine how to confess it. I have sinned the sin of Pride and some other sin I don't know the name of. I was proud because when I said let's go to the Sand Cut (and it wasn't even me that thought of it first) they came along just as if one of them had said it and all of a sudden I knew that all you have to do is say something and go ahead yourself without waiting and they'll do it. Then something happened that made me know I was scared of them and I admitted to myself I'm : yellow : and then I thought maybe because I made myself admit that, why then I wouldn't have to confess I was proud before. I thought it made up for it.

He tried to imagine the priests to whom he would confess this. Father McPhetridge, Father Whitman, Father Weiler, Father Ogle, Father Fish. Unless maybe if he got Father Fish but even if you tried to dodge and choose which was probably a sin why you couldn't ever tell for sure who you'd get. The others would just think he was crazy or something. Crazy kid. Or trying to get credit. And maybe he would be.

What you say in Confession they never tell because if they do they go straight to Hell. But whoever you confess to, he knows all the same. And if he knows you honestly are trying hard to be good he gives you credit afterwards too, that you sin if you try to get, he can't help himself. And if he thinks you're just trying to get credit why everytime he looks at you from then on you know what he thinks of you.

If he really thought you were, though, probably he wouldn't give you Absolution.

If you know it's a sin why you've got to confess it, no matter what he thinks.

The ferment of the hogpen, deepest of blacks and heaviest of oils, so stuffed and enriched their nostrils that as one they slowed against the fence and looked in. Small as the light was, on all its edges the chopped muck shone like coal. Jimmy slid his hand inside his overalls against his naked body; becoming aware of what he had

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done, he thoughtfully withdrew it. Straining to see into the darkness of the shed they could just discern the close-lying egglike forms of the hogs.

"Oink: oink," Hobe grunted, in a voice so deep that Richard was surprised.

Crooomphth, a sleeping hog replied.

They crossed the stile and struck into the woods, using their unhardened feet somewhat delicately along the familiar path. It was as thrilling cold and as vague and silent here as leaving a hot morning and stepping into a springhouse, and the smell of dead leaves and decaying wood and of the arising year was as keen as the coldness. A dogwood dilated ahead of them, each separate blossom enlarging like an eye, and swung behind, and deeply retired among the black trees ahead they could see the shining of others in the first light, triumphal and sad, lonesome as nebulae; likewise blind clumps of unawakened laurel; and now as the light became adequate they saw that the floor of the woods was still the leathery color of last year's leaves, meagerly stitched with green. In the deeper distances the woods were neutral as a photograph, as they had been all winter, but nearer by, the trunks of the trees were no longer black. Some were blackish, some were brownish, some were gray and gray green and silver brown and silver green and now the forms and varieties of bark, rugged, mosaic, deeply ribbed and satin sleek, knobbled like lepers and fluted like columns of a temple, became entirely distinct. Some of the twigs looked still as dark and fragile as the middle of winter, many were knobbled and pimpled and swollen as if they were about to break open and bleed, and many were the color of bronze and some were the color of blood; on some there were little buds like the nubbins of young deer and on others new leaves as neatly fledged as the feathering ought to be for the arrows Richard had never been able to make perfectly. They could see a long way into the woods as the morning cleared and everywhere underfoot this leather laid its flat musing waves and everywhere among the retreating trees strayed sober clouds of evergreen and mild clouds of blossom and the dreaming laurels, and everywhere, as deep into the stunned woods as they could see, layer above unwavering layer, the young leaves led like open shale; while, against their walking, apostolically, the trees turned. The path among these winding, dancing trees, new to them since late fall, was supple underfoot, the droning trees against which they laid or slapped their hands felt as alive as the flanks of horses, the air was all one listening joy. While they approached the clearing each held in mind a festal imagination of the plum tree, but it hung black, all crazed elbows, in the widened light. From somewhere, however,

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the fallen slivers of the ruined house it seemed, they were pursued by the chiding, familiar song of an ambushed bird whose kind they did not know; and at the far side of the clearing Richard stopped short and the others passed him: for here, abject against sharp bark, he found a locust shell, transparent silver breathed with gold, the whole back split, the hard claws, its only remaining strength, so clenched into the bark that it was only with great care and gentleness that he was able to detach the shell without destroying it.

It was as if air had been tightened into substance; only by touch and sight, not at all by weight, could he know he held it. He held it in his cupped hand and looked at the hunched, cloven back, turned it over with one fingertip and examined the brutally elaborate structure of the legs and the little talons. He tested: they could pierce a finger. He turned it again and held it near his eyes: the eyes looked into his. Yes even the eyes were there, blind silver globes which had so perfectly contained the living eyes: even the small rudimentary face in its convulsed and fierce expression, the face of a human embryo, he could remember the engraving in a book of his grandfather's, a paroxysm of armor, frowning, scowling, glaring, very serious, angry, remote, dead, a devil, older, stranger than devils, as early, ancient of days, primordial, as trilobites. Dinosaurs heaved and strove; a pterodactyl, cold-winged, skated on miasmic air, ferns sprang, to make coal in these very coves, more huge than the grandest chestnuts. Silurian, Mesozoic, Protozoic, Jurassic, all the planet one featureless and smoky marsh, Crowns, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Archaeozoic, through all ranks and kingdoms, to the central height, armed in the radiant cruelty of immortal patience, Ages and Angels marched clanging in his soul.

When did he come out? Just now? Just this spring? Or has he stayed all winter. And that would mean all fall and summer before.

I'd have seen him; last fall; last spring.

If he was there all the time and I didn't before, how come I saw him now?

All winter. All year. Or just since the first warm weather. Or just now before I found him.

That whole split back. Bet it doesn't hurt any worse than that to be crucified.

He crossed himself.

He sure did hold on hard.

He tried to imagine gripping hard enough that he broke his back wide open and pulled himself out of each leg and arm and finger and toe so cleanly and completely that the exact shape would be left intact.

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With veneration, talon by talon, he re-established the shell in its grip against the rigid bark.

By the time he caught up with Hobe and Jimmy they were almost to the railroad track.

At the far end of the break in the woods along the far side of the track they saw the weathered oak tower and soon, walking more briskly along the ties, the relics of machinery and the dead cones of putty-colored sand and the wrinkled sandstone and, at length, the sullen water itself, untouched in all these cold months. There were black slits along the sides of the tower where planks had fallen during the winter. The water was motionless and almost black. The whole place, familiar as it was, was deadly still, and seemed not at all to welcome them. As they left the track to round the near end of the Sand Cut there was a scuttling among the reddened brambles but although they went as fast as they could on their soft feet and threw rocks where the brambles twitched with noise they got no glimpse of whatever it was, and soon the scuttling stopped.

Now that they had stopped walking and stood in the brightened silence of the open light the day began to look practical; they realized how chilly the air still was, even here out of the woods, and how bitter the water looked, and they no longer felt like going in. But none of them was willing to admit this frankly even to himself, and it was only after they stripped that they became openly hesitant. They took care not to shiver more visibly than they could help or to appear to dawdle, either, but they did all dawdle, and they found that they were looking at each other, in this unhabitual place and hesitant quietness, with more interest than in the dormitory. Although Jimmy was the smallest of the three in every other way, his was much the biggest and during the winter he had grown much more hair than Richard had realized up to now. Hobe still didn't have much but then he was said to be part Indian so of course he wouldn't, yet, and probably never would have a lot. What he did have was dark, though, and showed up well against his dark skin, whereas Richard's was so light and there was so little of it that he realized it could probably not be seen at all, farther away than his own eyes. He suspected, however, that his was really the biggest, because it looked as if Jimmy had at least half a hard-up. Jimmy looked comfortable in his supremacy whether it was real or not (he certainly had more hair, anyhow, there wasn't any getting around that) and seemed to feel none of the embarrassment which Richard always felt acutely if he was seen with even a little bit of a hard-up. He turned partly away, though, in honor of Good Friday, and for the same reason he and Richard glanced at each other with even less candor

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than they would have at any other time, and Richard the more uneasily crossed and uncrossed his hands in front of himself. Only Hobe, of any boy Richard knew, never concealed his own body or his interest in another, and even now, Good Friday seemed to mean nothing to him. He looked at them, and watched them look at him, with a coolness which seemed almost amused. He urinated a few drops onto his belly and rubbed it in with the palm of his hand, against cramps. He made no gesture of covering himself and grabbed his testicles with one hand only at the instant he grabbed his nose with the other to leap with a spangling splash into the water.

He bounced up with an incredulous strangling yell and began a frenzied dogpaddle and both of them knew the water must be even colder than they had thought, and that there was no longer any chance of holding back. Jimmy went in feet first; Richard dove. The iron water distended enormously just beneath him and for an instant, knowing the brutal shock and the pain to which he had now inescapably committed himself, he felt the fatal exhilaration of a falling dream and had just time to dedicate within himself *for Thee!,* in a silent shout as deafening bright as a smiting of cymbals, then plunged into the smashing cold. Still crying *for Thee* within his ringing head, he slanted his hands to dive as deep as he could go and, though his eyes were open, could see nothing of the steep sandstone along which his hands guided him, but only the stifled effulgence of light above. It was so much colder than he had been able to imagine that in the first moment he had felt almost unconscious, but the diver's reflex had locked his breath and now that he searched from ledge to ledge downward along the much colder bottom there sprang throughout his flesh such an ardent and serene energy that he was aware of the entire surface of his body as if it were fire, and every muscle seemed to feel its own exact shape and weight, and he wished that he need never come up and lay against the deepest trench of the bottom, his belly foundering in ooze, his eyes shut, staying his hands on rocks. He lifted his face free of the ooze and cautiously opened his eyes; he could feel, more clearly than be sure he saw, the light which enlarged above him. He turned his head and looked up sidelong; there it was, a pure, heavy slab of still light which by imperceptible degrees shaded downward into most deadly darkness. His chest and his head began to knock, it became harder with every pulse to hold onto the rocks. O Lord let me suffer with Thee this day, he prayed, his lungs about to burst; and took hold more firmly. You got no right, his own voice silently told him, you got no right. No right; but still he fought off his need for air, filling his cheeks with the exhausted air from his lungs and taking it down again in the smallest

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possible gulps. His head was beating and ringing so fiercely that he could scarcely hear the fragments of his own efforts to dedicate and to reprove himself but blindly, with the last of his strength, held himself down. Then he knew that he had stayed down too long; too deep; he could not possibly reach the air in time. Good. That's fine. *For Thee!* he groaned. *No right! Get out!* he shouted silently. But even before he could command it or fully decide to command it his body was working for him; his feet braced against a ledge, his knees bent, and he leapt upward through the brightening water with more strength than he had realized he had left although the water seemed interminably tall above him and he knew still that he would never reach the surface in time and cried out to himself, *I didn't have the nerve!* and, *Anyhow I tried,* meaning at once that he had tried to stay down too long as an act of devotion and that he had tried to save himself from the deadliest of sins, and now could see unreachably above him, mocking and steep from attainment as stars, that wincing celestial ceiling of bland silver which set apart water and air and toward this straining, striving, aspiring, helpless upon God's will and pleasure, his fingers upward stretched like shrieks, raised up and grew his rooted need in the millennial leisures of a tree (*for Thee! O for Thee! Thee, Lord!*); and broke the surface in time, head back, gasping, feebly treading water, watching the streaming bruise-colored clamorous and silent whirling of the world and taking in air so deeply that his lungs felt as if they were tearing; and soon the world became stable and all of the coloring and discoloration cleared and stood up strongly through the top of the woods across the tracks and he could realize that except for the remote voices of the two boys and the still more remote voice of a bird the world itself was delicately silent and all the noise was within his own head and was rapidly dying: all that he saw still twitched with his pulse and out of the woods, beating like a heart, the sun stood up.

His teeth still ached at their roots and although he clenched them to keep them from chattering his chin trembled like a rabbit's nose and his breath came out shakily in many small pieces as of glass or ice. From its surface down to about his waist, the water seemed surprisingly warm, but from waist to knees it was grimly cold, and his stony feet trod a mortal bleakness of cold and dark to which he was thankfully sure now that he would never go down again. Yet except for his feet, which no longer seemed to belong to him, his body still blazed with pleasure in its existence, and it was no longer urgent and rigid but almost sleepy. He slid his slick hands along his ribs and his sides and

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found that in his sex he was as tightly shrunken as if he were a baby. I could have died, he realized almost casually. *Here I am!* his enchanted body sang. I could be dead right now, he reflected in sleepy awe. *Here I am!* Now that he had his breath and was quiet he no longer tried to control the rattling of his teeth but hung standing in the water, his head so turned from the others that they might not see the silent unexpected tears and, drowsily trying to make himself aware of the suffering to which at this moment Jesus was submitting Himself, crying for tenderness and thankful wonder, gazed steadily into the beating sun.

But staying still so long, coldness at length overcame him, and after swimming as fast as he could twice up and down the length of the quarry, he stumbled out.

He had all but forgotten them; they were already drying themselves with their shirts. Hobe's body was purplish; Jimmy looked as if he had been caught in a blue net.

"What you trine to do?" Hobe asked. "Drownd yourself?"

"I was just swimming under water."

"I was damn near ready to dive in after you," Jimmy said, "when you come up."

"We began to think you was drownded," Hobe said.

"No, I was all right," Richard said. He reached for his shirt. *"Heyy!"* he shouted.

Steering, serenely, his sutured brow, the sum of those several thrusting curves which seemed not of themselves to exert strength but merely to drink and send backward through them the energies of the guiding head they guided, a snake more splendid than Richard had ever seen before was just achieving a sandstone ledge and the first heat of the risen sun. In every wheaten scale and in all his barbaric patterning he was new and clear as gems, so gallant and sporting against the dun, he dazzled, and seeing him, Richard was acutely aware how sensitive, proud and tired he must be in his whole body, for it was clear that he had just struggled out of his old skin and was with his first return of strength venturing his new one. His style and brightness, his princely elegance, the coldness of his eye and the knifelike coldness and sweetness of his continuously altering line, his cold pride in his new magnificence, were not at the first in the least dismayed, not even by Richard's shout; only the little tongue, to Richard's almost worshiping delight and awe, sped like a thready horn of smoke, the eye seemed to meet Richard's and become colder and still more haughty, and the vitality of his elegance advanced him still further along the stone: so that for a few seconds Richard saw perfected before him, royally dangerous and to

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be adored and to be feared, all that is alien in nature and in beauty: and stood becharmed. But as the others ran up, within an instant so swift that it was impossible to see just what transpired among those curves of liquid paroxysm, with a chilly rasping against stone which excited Richard as nothing he had ever heard before had excited him, drawing a stripe of coldness down his spine, the snake reversed direction and slipped rapidly between the ankles of briars and beneath fallen leaves, his brilliance a constant betrayal. The others were shouting and Jimmy shoved a stick under the snake and flipped him so expertly that for a couple of seconds he sailed on the air in a convulsion of escape, a fluid hieroglyph, and landed on open rock in a humiliating flash of ivory belly before he righted himself and with oily fleetness made once more for the bushes. But now Hobe reared up a rock so heavy he could lift it only clumsily, high above his reeling head; and Richard, standing just behind him, felt himself reach toward the rock to pull it backwards out of his hands. But even as his own hand lifted forward he became aware of Jimmy's astounded eye on him, and thus became aware of what he was doing and caught himself, realizing that they would never understand why he did it, that they would be angry with him and rightly so and might even be mad enough to jump on him; and becoming thus aware, became aware also that it was not only his habit of gentleness to animals which made him want to spare the snake, but something new in him which he could not understand, about which he was profoundly uneasy. These several kinds of awareness came over him with terrible speed and transfixed him into the slowness of a dream, so that the fraction of a second froze the high rock, the incredulous bystander, the bemused hand, and seemed to last almost interminably, while he strove to stay his hand and to set it free. But it was after all only an instant, and before he could bring himself out of this hesitation, Hobe brought the rock crashing down against rock and against one arc of the veering snake which, angled like a broken whip, continued uselessly to thrust energy through its ruptured body, its eyes terrible, its tongue so busy that its speed made the shadow of a blossom. Jimmy hurried up with his stick and beat at its head but the head was still alert to dodge under his blows. Richard felt for a moment as if he had just finished retching. Then he picked up a small rock and yelling *"Get out of the way,"* squatted beside the snake and pounded at its head. The head lashed about his fist like summer lightning as he pounded and in the darkness of his violence the question darted, over and over, *is he poison? is he poison?* but he cared only for one thing, to put as quick an end as he could to all this terrible, ruined, futile

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writhing and unkillable defiance, and at length he struck and dazed, and struck and missed, and struck and broke the head which nevertheless lifted senilely, the tongue flittering and the one remaining eye entering his own eye like a needle; and again, and the head lay smashed and shifting among its debris; and again, and it was flattened against the stone, though still the body, even out beyond the earlier wound, lashed, lay resting, trembled, lashed.

As he watched this trembling twitching, desperately wishing that he could so crush the snake that it would never move again, he realized that it would not die until sundown, and even as he realized this he heard Hobe say it and became aware, through something quiet in Hobe's voice and through Jimmy's shyness, that they respected him; that in putting his bare hand within range of that clever head and in killing so recklessly and with such brutality, he had lost their contempt and could belong among them if he wanted to. He looked coldly at his trembling hand: bloody at the knuckles and laced with slime, which seemed to itch and to burn as it dried, it still held the rock.

"Better warsh that stuff off," Hobe said. "Git in your blood: *boy!*"

He still squatted, looking at his hand and wondering. In their good opinion, and in the rugged feeling of the hand itself and its ferocious moisture, he began to feel that he had been brave in a way he had never been brave before and he wanted the hand to clear gradually and naturally, the way the smudge clears from the forehead on Ash Wednesday. He could not be sure, in its pristine skin, what kind of snake this was, and the head was wrecked beyond any hope of determining whether it had the coffin shape, or venomous fangs. But it was not a rattler, nor was it likely a copperhead, nor was it striped like a moccasin, so that he had to doubt whether, after all, it had been poisonous. If it had not been poisonous he had not been brave; and if it had not been poisonous he was sorry he had killed it or even been fool enough to yell so the others would see it and so automatically kill it, for he had for a long while been fascinated by snakes and had felt that the harmless ones ought to be let alone, as few people let them alone. He was aware that Hobe had spoken and that he had given no kind of answer, and this made him uneasy. He wanted very much to taste the slime; but they were watching. He turned up the rock and looked at it: the slime and breakage of the snake caught the whitening sunlight like mica. He slammed the rock into the middle of the water (just about where I dove in, he realized upon reflection) and clambered cautiously down to the edge and thrust his hand into the cold water and up to the elbow, beating quietly in the brilliant cold, and watched it in

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the water; the veins stood out on his forearm almost like a man. He decided that he would only submerge his hand, not wash it, no matter what Hobe advised. But Hobe said nothing.

They dressed thoughtfully and they had very little to say; now that they were on their way back there wasn't much to think about except the trouble which waited for them. There would have been trouble even if they had come straight back from Chapel, for they had outstayed the watch they had signed for by a long time. But they began to realize now that it would not have been as bad as it was bound to be now; maybe they'd even have been let off. If they had gotten back to bed at any time before daylight it wouldn't have been as bad as it would be now. If they had come in just while the sun was rising it would have been bad but not as bad as this. Now it was broad daylight and brighter every minute, and with every minute longer now that they stayed away they were in for worse trouble. They might be kept on bounds, they might have to pull stumps or clean out the pit of the backhouse, they might be whipped, they might even not be let go on the Easter Monday picnic and they had planned to go clear to Wet Cave which had never yet been fully explored, and find new passages and if possible, a new and secret entrance. There was no telling what, for the worst of it was that they had gone against a strict rule so conspicuously on Good Friday, and by taking advantage of a religious event, and there was no way of imagining how much more serious an offense this might seem to priests than to people. The train came down from Coal City and passed them while they dressed, making a great deal of gallant and vigorous noise, but it only sharpened their realization that by now everybody was up and around and that certain people would be looking for them and watching for them already, so that they hardly even had the heart to look up at the blank baggage car and the empty coach and to wave at the engineer who saluted them.

Richard didn't even look up as the train passed, nor had the thought of punishment very clearly entered his mind; all the while he dressed, he watched the snake. From the break on back it lay belly up and the pallor of the belly, and the different structure of the scales, so well designed for crawling, were quietly sickening to see. He tried to see all that he could see without looking at the annihilated head, but his eyes kept flicking back to where it lay, mashed almost like soft metal against the rock, almost as flat and ragged as the toadfrogs and pennies they used to put on the tracks in Knoxville, after the streetcar ran over them. The snake moved very weakly now, but strongly enough that Richard could not doubt it would keep moving, and blindly experiencing the agony of death, straight on through the morning and

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the Three Hour Service and on through the afternoon until, at last, as the top rim of the sun sank out of sight, the tip of the tail would give one last quaver and the snake would lie still forever.

"Well come on," he was startled to hear Hobe's voice at his shoulder. He turned to go.

"Aint you takin him?"

It had not occurred to Richard; now that it did, he certainly did not want him.

"No."

"Hell fahr, you kilt him didn you?"

"I don't want him."

Hobe and Jimmy glanced at each other. "Okay," Hobe said. He took the snake carefully by the tail. The break in the body held firm; the head pulled loose from the rock like adhesive tape. He snapped him like a whip; now most of the head was lost.

"He'll bust in the middle," Jimmy said.

"Hell I keer," Hobe said. But he did not snap the snake again. Half a snake wouldn't be worth showing.

On the far side of the track they fell into single file for the woods path, Hobe ahead, swinging the limpid snake at the new leaves, then Jimmy, then Richard. Without consulting or imitation, all three had put their shoes on when they dressed; they walked rather quickly, and they did not talk.

In refusing the snake, Richard realized, he had lost a considerable portion of their esteem, though not all of it. He was still regarded as the hero of this occasion and he knew he was still one of them in a way he had never been before. He was still pleased to have been accepted and still pleased with his own courage, though he was sorry the snake had been killed, and unhappy and uneasy whenever he caught a glimpse of it ahead. He began to know how very hungry he was and with his hunger he remembered once again, with surprise and shame that he could have forgotten, what Day this was. It must be on past seven o'clock by now. He would not start carrying the Cross until nine. By now He would just be sitting on the stool or the bench in the garrison room, probably sort of like a locker room, while the soldiers paid Him no attention much but just hogged their breakfasts and maybe threw cornbread at Him, no it wouldn't be cornbread; He just sat there with nothing to eat or drink and some of the worst things were already over by now; He sat in the purple robe holding the reed and the blood was drying on His back from the scourges and the torn wounds were itching and the spit was drying on His face (like my hand is drying), not just spit but the nastiest kind of snot, too, if it happened here they'd

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spit tobacco juice, and down through the drying spit the blood ran from the Crown of Thorns; how did they push those thorns down around His forehead without hurting their hands? And here I am, he thought, suddenly remembering the absoluteness of emotions during the moments just after he woke up that morning. Here I am. He struck his breastbone and tried to imagine how it would feel to be scourged with a cat-o'-nine-tails with lead tips, and to wear a crown of thorns. Busy with twisted and uneven walking, he could not make it very clear to himself. He closed his eyes and almost immediately stumbled on a root. Jesus falls for the first time, he said to himself. God help me. God forgive me I didn't mean it. He kept his eyes open and took care how he walked.

The woods were full of ordinary sunlight now; the colors were no longer strange and the deep perspectives were no longer mysterious, but pleasant and casual. When they came to the clearing it was full of simple light and the bird was no longer singing. When they had come nearly to the other side of this warm open silence Richard hurried back to the tree on which he had left the locust shell, detached it gently, and with great care, scarcely looking at it, settled it into the breast-pocket of his shirt. They were not far into the woods when he caught up. His trotting and quick breathing, now that he slowed again to a walk, made him aware once more of his sharp hunger. It was going to be a long day without food, without, if he could help it, even rinsing his mouth out with water. I'll help it, he told himself, imagining water in his mouth. I'll not do that, anyhow. He thought again of the thorns, and the spittle, and the patience and courage, and of his maculate hand. The least I can do, he told himself. The *least* I can do! The day lifted ahead of him very long and hard, a huge unshaded hill. The climbing of it would go on in the heavy sun without rest throughout this livelong day and for ever so long as he might be alive and there at the top there was dying: His, his; so hard and so long. It won't be over till sundown, he said to himself. Such a terrible and cold heaviness distended in the pit of his stomach, and his knees became suddenly so weak, that for a few moments he had to lean against a tree, and found it difficult to breathe. He had never before known such heaviness or such cold, crushing sorrow. *"Forgive!"* he whispered, barely able to bring the word out: *"Forgive! O God forgive!"* But the cold and enormous heaviness only increased, and the sadness now seemed more than his soul could endure.

After a little, however, he regained sufficient strength in his knees, and walked again, by now a good way behind the others. But the

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heaviness stayed, so that he felt as if he were carrying an all but impossible weight in the middle of his body.

By now they could see the first of the buildings through the light-leaved woods; and now the whole of the School stood up before them and the two boys ahead walked more slowly, wondering what lie, if any, might lighten their trouble. But they could not think of any that would do and when Richard overtook them, lingering unhappily at the stile, they were so far beyond hope that they didn't even bother to ask him whether he had any ideas.

Now that he was with them again, the heaviness was somewhat less severe, and he began to wonder what had made him so deeply weak and unhappy, and what kind of trouble they would be in for; now he could clearly foresee Father Whitman's hard sleepless eyes in his first look at them as they would come up from the woods, their hair spiky with incriminating wetness; and much as he dreaded in advance the punishment, which would be a whipping for sure, he told himself, he dreaded even more the first meeting with these eyes, and the first words that would be spoken, though he suspected that these would be tempered to the day. He heard Jimmy say to Hobe that he better get rid of that snake, and he thought that he sure better; and he was neither surprised nor particularly troubled when, a few moments later, Hobe slung the snake in among the hogs. He stood with the other children at the fence and watched with interest while two of the hogs, with snarling squeals, scuffled over the snake, tore it apart at its middle wound and, while the two portions still tingled in the muck, gobbled them down. It occurred to him, with a lancing quailing of horror and pity, that the snake was still alive, and would stay alive in their bellies, however chewed, and mangled, and diffused by acids, until the end of the day; but now, remembering the head, he told himself that the snake was so far gone by now that he must be a way beyond really feeling anything, ever any more (the phrase jumped at him): (Who had said that? His mother. "Daddy was terribly hurt so God has taken him up to Heaven to be with Him and he won't come back to us ever any more.") "Ever any more," he heard his quiet voice repeat within him; and within the next moment he ceased to think of the snake with much pain. When the boys turned from the sty he followed them toward the Main Building carrying, step by step with less difficulty, the diminishing weight in his soul and body, his right hand hanging with a feeling of subtle enlargement at his thigh, his left hand sustaining, in exquisite protectiveness, the bodiless shell which rested against his heart.

(The Morning Watch *will appear in book form in April under the imprint of Houghton Mifflin.*)

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BOOKS

A CASE STUDY IN ANTI-SECULARISM

THE MORAL LIFE AND THE ETHICAL LIFE. By Eliseo Vivas. University of Chicago Press. $6.00.

Mr. Eliseo Vivas is a recent agonized convert to what Santayana calls the genteel tradition in philosophy—now once more fashionable—which takes as the primary fact of moral experience the consciousness of guilt or sin. In this book he offers some reasons for his abandonment of any and all varieties of naturalism. He now passionately affirms the view that values are not essentially related to human experience but subsist outside or beyond it. Man's duty to be ethical—to recognize the absolute validity of every human life—flows from his duties to know God, whose existence is inferred from the order of nature, and to realize himself as a person. Mr. Vivas also believes that "the true destiny of man is not reached by the path of happiness but by the path of salvation"—which consists in liberation from the burden of natural anguish. Secularism, which aims at happiness not salvation, is the most dreadful enemy of human civilization.

This is an unusual book in various ways not the least peculiar of which are its literary manners. These even transcend the latitude allowed repentant sinners. I cannot recall any writing in philosophy which suddenly interrupts its exposition with an irritated request to positivists, pragmatists, 'empiricists'—all opprobriously labeled as offspring of Thrasymachus—not to read further. Although unsympathetic fellow-philosophers are all children of God, some of them apparently are beyond redemption. Pragmatism is an "anti-human and barbaric" philosophy. Stevenson's acute analysis of ethical discourse is called a rationalization of the attitude of "crypto-Fascist." Dewey is guilty of "monstrous nonsense" and James of "vicious nonsense." Naturalism "leads to frightful practical consequences." Those who believe it fool themselves, but not Mr. Vivas, in believing that they can "condemn morally the crimes of Al Capone and of Goering." Indeed, were they not saved by a kindly schizophrenia which prevents them from living according to their doctrines, they would act like Al Capone and Goering.

It would be hard to find anything comparable to this personal tone outside the literature of dialectical materialism and some pages

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of Monsignor Sheen. Not unexpectedly the liberal is characterized as "a pathetically disinterested, up-rooted animal" (where have we heard of the rootless intellectuals, guilty of the crime of objectivism?). Gibbon is mentioned with animus and the Middle Ages referred to as a period "which partisanship and historical ignorance dismiss as the days of the Inquisition." In certain ways the position is reminiscent of the line taken by Mortimer Adler ten years ago in his claim that America had more to fear from its naturalist professors than from Hitler. The unspoken implication of the view that naturalist doctrines "lead to the most frightful practical consequences" is, of course, that those who profess them should be purged.

Despite its stream of innuendo and insult which just stops short of personal vilification, the book contains not a particle of evidence that naturalism or any school of philosophical analysis leads to frightful practical consequences. The naturalistic explanation of moral phenomena, in terms of sociology, psychology, and intelligence, may be mistaken and confused, but it does not call the existence of these phenomena into question. The question at issue is whether naturalism can account for the facts of moral experience, or any other set of facts, more adequately than alternative doctrines. In short, the issue is one of truth, not of edification or of therapy for sick souls.

This theoretical question cannot be settled unless the position being considered is accurately presented. And I regret to say that Mr. Vivas is simply not trustworthy in reporting or interpreting the key positions of naturalism, especially those of Dewey. I restrict myself to just a few illustrations. He maintains that, save for a slight inconsistency in his 90th year, Dewey identifies scientific method with the techniques of physics; that by growth he means the indefinite "addition" of any quality to personality; and that he conceives of man "solely in terms of abstract powers, faculties and endowments" (this of the author of *Human Nature and Conduct*).[1]

1. In my own comparatively unimportant case Vivas doesn't even bother to misinterpret. He simply resorts to outright invention. In my *Education for Modern Man* I say that since the fundamental *social* problem of our culture "is to defend and extend our democratic heritage of rights and duties in an industrial society that can provide security for all," the social science curriculum of our schools should study contemporary materials relevant to this problem and not merely the great books of the past. Whereupon Vivas attributes to me the doctrine that the *ends* of education should be political, that students should be brought up to enlist in a party, and similar Zhdanov-like views with which my own are explicitly compared as only a weaker version. No mention is made of the fact that I vigorously criticize this position. Nor is any reference made to my list of the ends of education, cited on page 2 of the book and carefully developed in the text. For it would give the lie direct to Mr. Vivas' words.

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Or take the interpretation of the passage from Dewey in which he discusses the relation between ideals and actual conditions. "The alternative," Dewey writes, "is not between abdication and acquiescence on one side, and neglect and ignoring on the other; it is between a morality which is effective because related to what is, and a morality which is futile and empty because framed in disregard of actual conditions." To which Vivas replies with gusto that "it is not the business of moral reflection to *affirm what is.*" But to affirm here means to approve, precisely what Dewey clearly excludes as one alternative. If I prescribe what a man should do to achieve his health, am I thereby approving the condition he is now in? But can I disregard it? The business of moral reflection, continues Vivas, is *"to affirm what ought to be,"* as if anyone can intelligently prescribe what ought to be without taking note of what is whether in health or morals. What a man ought to do must at least be possible for him to do, and whether it is possible cannot be determined without some reference to the actual. Were Vivas to deny this he would be admitting that his moral injunctions were completely irrelevant to human experience. And in fact, elsewhere in the book, Vivas accepts what Dewey writes on this and other points although he previously denounced him for making them.

Before turning to an analysis of Mr. Vivas' positive views, there is one more preliminary question of somewhat general interest. From first to last he keeps denouncing the blindness of naturalists to the richness, complexity, and pathos of human experience, and contrasts their moral obtuseness with his own superior insight into values. He declares that the cause of his deepest opposition to naturalism is its secularism. Since naturalism denies the non-temporal spirit in man, the consequence is a barbaric society in which injustice and cruelty thrive. Dewey and other naturalists, whether they know it or not, have "advocated the destruction of all the values that are basically constitutive of our civilization."

Now strictly speaking, secularism is a social philosophy which is opposed to the existence of an established church with authoritative power in civic affairs. Its opposite is clericalism. The characteristic doctrines of secularism are compatible with personal belief or disbelief in theism and spiritualism. Conversely, it is logically possible for naturalists like Hobbes and Santayana, not to speak of non-believing statesmen, to favor giving the church a privileged position in society to insure "peace and order." Historically, however, it is quite true that the growth of naturalism has been accompanied by an extension of secularism. But is it also true that either historically or psychologically secularistic naturalism coarsens moral sensitivity and blinds those who hold it to the tragedies and injustices of our time as Vivas reiterates?

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This is an empirical question and only empirical inquiries can answer it. Let us ask ourselves who the individuals have been who have rallied the conscience of the world against the great moral outrages of our era. Call the roll of the cases and places. Sacco-Vanzetti, Scottsboro, the Reichstag Fire, the Moscow Trials, Guernica, Munich, Warsaw, Katyn, down to the latest infamous Communist frame-up. Make a list of the causes which ought to raise the sharecroppers, the sweatshop workers and every other exploited group to the level of human existence. How does Mr. Vivas account for the fact that the value-blind naturalists have been in the thick and almost always in the lead of the struggle? How does he account for the fact that in every good fight believer and non-believer, men of all and of no religious faith, are found? And where were Mr. Vivas and so many other of the latter-day tribe of self-designated saviors of civilized values? Where, indeed? Safely out of fire, denouncing naturalists as the wreckers and saboteurs of civilization. Or charging, as Mr. Vivas says of Dewey in the volume, that they have "undertaken to soften us up for the Red push," and at the same time pretending to be above the vulgar struggle between Stalinists and anti-Stalinists—a struggle on whose outcome the free institutions of the West depend.

How sensitive the twice-born Mr. Vivas is to actual values in experience is tellingly revealed in a comment he makes on a passage from my book *Education for Modern Man.* Urging a study of the present as well as the past, I had written that students could learn as much from "the heroic tragedy of Warsaw" as from the last stand at Thermopylae. Mr. Vivas lashes himself into a fury about this. How, he asks, can anyone compare the qualities displayed by the Greeks, as recorded by Herodotus, with what is "one of the merely (*sic!*) sordid minor butcheries of history." It is like saying that the New York *Times* is as good as Herodotus.

The tragedy of Warsaw was a double one. First, the battle of the Jewish Ghetto against the annihilation corps of the Nazis reversed almost a millennium of Jewish history. Against the greatest odds, these humble scholars, peddlers, and secular socialists, fought the most desperately lost battle in recent history not only for themselves but for Western Christendom which stood idly by. The second act of the tragedy of Warsaw took place when the remainder of the city, encouraged by the Soviets, rose against the Nazis while Stalin's armies waited outside until the Poles were destroyed. Whoever cannot learn from events like these, about how men live and die in extreme situations, about ultimate values and disvalues, about the meaning of totalitarianism and political neutrality in a world aflame, is not likely to learn anything

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from present experience. It is not necessary to deny honor to the ancient Greeks in order to recognize it among the Poles and Jews and any other people who live and die bravely.

Confident that none of his readers will remember or care about the tragedy of Warsaw, Vivas adds: *"And how can we blame anyone for forgetting it since there was no Herodotus to record it?"*

Nothing more devastating than these words, which I have italicized, has ever been said about the effects of self-righteous absorption with the "eternal values" which always turn out to be values embodied in the past. They could well serve as an epitaph for that movement in culture and education which argued that exclusive concern with the glories of the past was the best preparation for understanding the great issues, challenges, and decisions of living experience. There was no Herodotus to record the events of Munich and Yalta and Potsdam, no Dante to record the hell of concentration camps, no Gibbon to record the rise and decline of the Western Empires—how, then, according to Vivas, can we understand their values and disvalues? This hidebound traditionalism would startle even Mr. Hutchins.

According to Mr. Vivas moral values and disvalues have a mode of being which is independent of human experience. They are neither dependent upon, nor essentially related to, any need, want, interest, felt satisfaction or mode of apprehension. They do not arise in the course of experience nor do they have to justify themselves in experience. On the contrary human experience has to justify itself in relation to them. They are not created by men but discovered in the same way as the laws of logic or the laws of nature. They have an ontological or "ontic" status, and when not embodied in experience must be regarded as "part of the structure that makes spatio-temporal existence possible"—so that presumably without them there simply would not be any world at all.

Moral personality is constituted by these timeless values which find a man as much as he finds them and "exercise on him their requiredness." The moral person, then, must have an ontic status, too—a short proof to immortality which the author refuses to take. But whatever its status, the intrinsic value of the person "is constituted by the value of the spirit" which is different from the psyche, which in turn is different from the organism. Only because of the existence of the spirit which is "real", "immaterial" and "different" from the self and body, can the person be given primacy. And without the recognition of that primacy, man's moral career must degenerate into a history of dog eat dog.

Mr. Vivas bases the validity of his entire position upon this meta-

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physical theory of value. That the theory cries out for proof is obvious since it is beset by certain prima facie difficulties, and by such paradoxical consequences that some readers may feel that if one can believe this, one can believe anything. For example, values are endowed with the properties of "requiredness." But "requiredness" is a relational term—something is required in or for a situation or experience. How can anything then be called required before, or independently of, the situation which needs the requirements?

Since Mr. Vivas is scornful of logical contradictions—except when he can catch someone else out in one—we point to another kind of apparent difficulty. In respect to their independence of human feeling, emotion, or interest, moral laws are endowed by the author with a status similar to logical and physical laws. But how do we discover a logical law or principle? Only by showing that its denial is self-contradictory or that it seems to be valid in virtue of its form alone. Yet every moral principle can be denied without self-contradiction and there is no difference in the logical form of moral and immoral assertions. What is the evidence for the existence of physical laws? Ultimately in the specific compulsions physical objects exercise upon our behavior no matter how we feel about it. No one can violate a universal law of nature. But the very nature of a moral law, even if we can find one which is universal, is that it can be violated.

Mr. Vivas does not discuss these difficulties. Instead he believes he can establish the ontic objectivity or substance of values on the basis of two propositions. (1) Value qualities like all other qualities of perception have objective character as given *in* some experience. (This is "phenomenal objectivity" which even an hallucination possesses.) (2) "The reality which is disclosed by physics is [not] more truly real than that which is disclosed by ordinary perception." (That is to say, a table described in terms of electrons is not more truly real than a table described as an object in use.) To assert these two propositions, according to Vivas, is to assert the ontic status of value. And in the end it turns out, with one qualification considered below, that this is all the proof he has.

The assertion that these two propositions, taken together, entail belief in the ontic status of value should have given Mr. Vivas pause because, terminology aside, they are both commonplaces of the experimental theory of knowledge. If to hold them commits one to belief in ontic value, Dewey has been committed to it all the time. And were this all that the ontic theory implied it would establish too much. Not only would values be subsistent but dreams and hallucinations, pains and pleasures. We would then have to distinguish between the ontic status

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of snakes whose bite kills, imagined snakes whose bite does not, and merely valued or disvalued snakes. We would still have to re-introduce the ordinary distinctions of the ordinary world which recognize that snakes can exist independently of men but imaginary snakes cannot, and that snakes as valued or disvalued are essentially related to human desires. What the second proposition asserts is no more than that the ascription of reality to anything is always an ascription of reliability in some context; and the fact that science is concerned with those invariant relationships that hold both in human and nonhuman contexts, is no ground for denying the reality or reliability of values in a human context. But what Vivas does is to assert the ontic being of value *outside* of any context. What Dewey and other naturalists say is that because my headache is caused by certain variations in physico-chemical conditions inside and outside my body—conditions whose existence is independent of my experience—the headache is nonetheless real in the context of my experience, and so real that it may have important effects upon me and others. What Vivas is saying is that headaches can exist without being felt! More, he holds that nothing can arise in human experience without having previously been. There is no genuine novelty or creation or emergence either of values or of anything else. Make sense of this who can.

It is difficult enough to hold the view that the non-value qualities and relations of things subsist in some ontic realm independently of the spatio-temporal existence of any or all things, and that as the realist Bishop in one of Anatole France's novels remarked, before there were feet, or behinds, or kicks in the world, "kicks-in-the-behind" resided in the bosom of being from all eternity. But to maintain that values and disvalues of pleasures and pains possess objective being independently of the existence of sentient organisms or centers of feeling, whether located in an organism or not, is if not altogether meaningless, an unsupported dogma. Further, to endow values with *power* to command human spirits is—may I be forgiven—to import strange antics into the realm of ontics.

No one can speak or act intelligibly except on the assumption that the value of anything is ultimately a value for someone, and that the possibility of being experienced is at least a necessary condition for the presence of values.

Apparently one ground for Mr. Vivas' denial of this view is his contention that before we can choose between values we must recognize them, and before they can be recognized they must have ontic status. Here as elsewhere he seems to be systematically misled by the assump-

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tion that because expressions have the same grammatical form, they refer to the same logical or physical state of affairs. The price of a commodity is an objective character. My present choice recognizes it but doesn't create it. Does it therefore follow that prices have ontic status prior to, or independently of, the existence of the world, the social system, the choices of previous buyers or the use-values of commodities in a particular culture?

Mr. Vivas' metaphysical theory is actually a hopeless hodgepodge of fragments from Plato, Hartman, Heidegger, and of certain residues from Dewey which he has not yet been able to purge from his system.

Why does Mr. Vivas reject naturalism—root and branch? There are many reasons. One is that naturalism like materialism, of which it is only a shamefaced form, denies that "the powers of the psyche are distinct from the alleged conditions which are said to cause them," or that consciousness can be distinguished from what causes it. But this is the veriest nonsense. How can I fail to *distinguish a* from *b,* if I am maintaining that *a* is an effect of *b?* What naturalists assert on this point is that so far no conclusive evidence has been produced which establishes that the psyche or spirit or soul, defined in terms of observable properties, exists *separated* from the physiological or cultural conditions under which it is found in human experience.

Another reason Mr. Vivas gives, incompatible with the first, is that naturalists cannot explain these phenomena of moral consciousness which they do recognize like the sense of obligation or dedication or guilt. And it is true that their explanations are not satisfactory to Mr. Vivas. Nor are their explanations satisfactory to each other. A considerable part of Mr. Vivas' criticisms of naturalists consists of a summary of their criticisms of each other. Even if they all agreed Mr. Vivas would still be in disagreement because in his conception of scientific explanation any attempt to establish the conditions—biological, psychological, and social—in which the qualities of moral experience occur, involves the explaining away or invidious reduction of these qualities. Values must be present in the antecedent conditions of the processes out of which they arise. By the same logic he should deny that science explains anything, even a cold in the head properly, since the conditions of its occurrence are not themselves racked by coughs and sneezes.

We may grant that no situation in which human need, interest, or emotion enters is value-free. But to infer from this that the antecedently existing conditions out of which the human situation arises are themselves pervaded by value qualities is like saying that the pain

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which we feel when a knife cuts a nerve is itself already in the knife. It is Mr. Vivas, not contemporary naturalists, who believes that there can be no more in the effect than in the cause, for he seeks to show that nothing could come into existence—whether values or the sense of values—unless it were already there.

That no more than promising beginnings have been made in explaining guilt feelings in terms of sociology, psychology, and personal history would be granted by any sober naturalist. For that matter, we cannot yet explain the origins of genetic variation and an indefinite number of other physical and biological phenomena. But Mr. Vivas brushes all this aside as an evasion and asserts that the naturalistic approach can explain nothing—absolutely nothing— about man's moral experience because the phenomena in question make manifest the presence in human nature of something beyond nature, society, and human nature—something which points to the existence of an entirely different kind or order.

This is certainly a position worth considering. It has an ancient and honorable lineage much more clearly expressed in a thousand writers than in Mr. Vivas. But so far it has never explained these phenomena except by converting the problematic into the mysterious and multiplying entities and problems beyond necessity.

It is one thing to say about any naturalist's conception of human nature that it is shallow and unscientific. Dewey can learn from Freud and Freud from Dewey and both from the gestaltists and other observers old and new. There is nothing in his method, which is both self-corrective and always on the look-out for new knowledge, which precludes him from discovering that all men are as hopelessly vicious as Mr. Vivas believes them to be. It is quite another thing to assert that we possess a knowledge about the facts of human nature which is necessarily beyond confirmation by patient investigation—i.e., by the use of hypotheses, logical inference, and controlled observation that define the *pattern* of scientific knowledge.

The most important reason for Mr. Vivas' rejection of naturalism is his dread of what he fears is its inescapable moral corollary. Unless we hold that there exists an absolute standard of moral perfection—vague and dangerous as it may be to invoke such a standard—then all that is left for us is a might makes right morality. He is quite explicit on this point. If we reject the view that there is a criterion of perfection identical for all men in all societies, "we would do well to quit fooling ourselves with unstable attempts to look at the truth, for the other firm alternative is the frankly 'might-makes-right' morality of the posi-

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tivist, which Stevenson clarified for us in our day and which we can trace back through William James through Hobbes, to Thrasymachus."

But this does not follow in the least any more than the kindred notion of Monsignor Sheen that if we do not worship God, *his* God, we must worship Hitler or Stalin. It is the most fundamental blunder anyone can make about naturalism in ethics. If I define the good as that which I choose after reflection or as that which fulfills most completely basic needs and desires, or as that which gives the deepest felt satisfaction—to mention only a few naturalist positions—and if I relate the right, as all naturalists must, ultimately to the good, then nothing in logic or experience can ever show that might is or makes right.

The equation between might and right implies that wherever one term is employed the other can be substituted without making a difference to the intended meanings, or the actual usages, of the expressions in which the terms appear. If we perform this operation in any natural language in which "might" and "right" appear, simple observation of the usage of the expressions in which the terms have been substituted, show this to be false. Those who say that "might" and "right" have the same meaning can easily be shown that such an identification is inadequate to account for their own usage of the terms.

And if we look beyond linguistic facts to the non-linguistic facts of experience and history, what do the latter show? Merely that might can defeat me, not prove my point of view wrong. Only evidence and intelligence can prove my judgments of good and bad wrong. Mr. Vivas assumes that no moral judgment can be objectively true unless it is universally true, that anything which is truly valid for some interests is truly valid for all interests. But it is obvious that the standard of perfection for a tiger *cannot* be human and that of a Martian who looks like a man *need not* be human. And whether tigers or Martians conquer man would not affect the truth of the judgment that a certain course of conduct would be better for man than some other. The *extent* to which a *common* objective morality or standard can be established among men depends upon the degree to which they share common needs, upon the extent to which when at odds they are still sufficiently alike to work out co-operative ways of becoming more alike, or sufficiently alike to agree about the permissable limits of being different. This is an empirical question.

Mr. Vivas' notions that there must subsist a criterion of human perfection which is valid for everybody, everywhere, and always; that this criterion must have an ontic status whose nature is independent of the existence of human nature, and that its discovery is really the aim of all

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efforts to resolve conflicts of human interests—are not merely inherently vague but completely irrelevant to the actual tasks of settling value conflicts as they empirically arise.

Our task in these difficult times, over which Mr. Vivas wrings his hands, is not to find or agree upon criteria of human perfection but to take our point of departure from concrete differences within the given historical situation in order to develop specific institutional rules and devices within which compatible interests can be broadened and shared, and incompatible interests negotiated with a minimum of violence. Imagine trying to settle a collective bargaining dispute by finding the pre-existent ontic hierarchy of a priori values to which all human beings should be committed! Not only do ideals of human perfection themselves reflect the differences in interests which are the occasion of conflict, they tend to exacerbate these differences, since their absolute non-empirical character invites endless dialectical dispute resolved, if at all, by ultimata and bulls of excommunication of the kind Vivas looses on so many pages. His tone makes one glad he hasn't the power to back them up.

That men are members of the same biological species does not guarantee that they will always succeed in composing their differences satisfactorily. And still less if they are considered theologically as children of a God who, according to a few of his representatives, has doomed some of his infant offspring to eternal damnation. It is not the presumed origins of men, in this world or any other, which are relevant to human morality but their present nature and the consequences of their contemplated actions upon each other. Today their interests are so intimately intertwined that it requires no metaphysics to prove that their survival depends upon recognizing it. Intelligence can show that what unites them, the common bonds of need, hope, and fear of sudden death, is more important than what divides them.

Nonetheless naturalists have always recognized without flinching that after intelligence has done its work there may still remain interests so deep-rooted, and so much a part of natures in conflict, that they are inarbitrable. This is less often true than is believed. But only someone craving for cosmic harmony can deny it is ever true. The conflict between good and good, between species and species, between gods and devils if they exist, is a practical challenge to a naturalist but not a theoretical embarrassment as it is to a supernaturalist. Even when we have to fight for our life against them, it is possible to recognize the necessities of natures different from our own which impel them to take the course they do. Nor need this intellectual chivalry or courtesy weaken our resolution in the struggle for what we believe right.

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Mr. Vivas, however, seems hysterical lest the cosmos or God not always be on his side. It is not being wrong he fears so much as being on the losing side. He tends to make every moral decision a crisis at the heart of being, and every conflict ultimate. He is desperately pessimistic about the nature of man and yet stupendously optimistic about the cosmic harmony of which man's sinfulness is a necessary part. It is likely that his error about men creates the need for his consolatory beliefs about the universe.

That he is in error about men is patent from the way he writes about them. Because they are not perfect, they are scoundrels. Because they are finite and limited, they are abandoned sinners. Certain passages suggest that what men normally desire is sharply different from what they should desire, which if taken as a characterization of human desires may be true of the pathologically disoriented or criminal not of normal human beings. The view that human beings are not inherently evil and that whatever they are, they can become better is caricatured into the view that human beings can become morally perfect—angels—and dismissed as "weak, sentimental and shallow" Pelagianism.

Mr. Vivas' view of man embraces the philosophers no less than other

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men. He is certain that the naturalists will never forgive him for his defection, as if he were being persecuted by a camorilla of intellectual thugs in behalf of a church, and as if anyone ever asked anything of him but convincing arguments. After all, most philosophical naturalists are renegade Platonists or Christians, and our secular culture happily has no state or official philosophy.

In an article in *The Western Review* some years ago, largely incorporated in this book, Mr. Vivas tells us that the world in which we live is "a sewer," not because of its social institutions but because man is what he is. And he is speaking not merely of Hitler but of Hitler's victims, not merely of imaginary enemies but of those near and dear to him. "As one looks around him he sees in his neighbors and in his friends an appalling indifference to the human problem and one is frightened. The man you are talking to suddenly loses his human appearance and you see in his eyes the look of the ferret or the fox, or playing barely under the surface of the false smile, the snarl of the jackal." And more in this vein.

Even allowing for rhetorical exaggeration, Mr. Vivas is evidently not in a state to give an objective report of the nature of man. If the generality of human beings is as bad as it seems to his suspicious eyes, we can understand why he is tempted either to follow the advice of Job's wife to curse God and die, or take the Kierkegaardian leap to absurdity. Certainly, the values of civilization which he seeks to defend against naturalism would be irretrievably lost were men as depraved as he thinks. Nor is it easy to see why belief in God would improve man's character more radically now than in the last two thousand years.

The premises from which Mr. Vivas derives the eternal subsistence of an objective ideal of human perfection, which together with the order of nature intimates the existence of God, are emotional, not logical or scientific. The necessity which in his mind ties premises and conclusions together is one of emotional compulsion. It reveals more about Mr. Vivas than about the cosmos.

A naturalistic moral philosophy by making more modest claims than those of Mr. Vivas may yet achieve more in building a society fit for man. It will not attempt to fly outside the realm of nature and experience in quest of man's good, or mistake moral imperatives for cosmic necessities. Confronted with the spectacle of the agonized conscience, it will recall the closing lines of Santayana's prematurely entitled *The Genteel Tradition at Bay*:

> When therefore a tender conscience extends its maxims beyond their natural basis, it not only ceases to be rational in its deliverances, and

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becomes fanatical, but it casts the livid color of its own insanity upon nature at large. A strained holiness, never without its seamy sides, ousts honorable virtue, and the fear of so many enemies becomes the greatest enemy of the soul. No true appreciation of anything is possible without a sense of its *naturalness*, of the innocent necessity by which it has assumed its special and extraordinary form. In a word, the principle of morality is naturalistic. Call it humanism or not, only a morality frankly relative to man's nature is worthy of man, being at once vital and rational, martial and generous, whereas absolutism smells of fustiness as well as of faggots.

Sidney Hook

THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRACY

THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES. By Karl R. Popper. Princeton University Press. $7.50
FREEDOM, POWER AND DEMOCRATIC PLANNING. By Karl Mannheim. Oxford University Press. $5.00

Our century has been a protracted exercise in social frustration: we cannot seem to construct a society which meets the needs of an industrial age. First laissez-faire liberalism failed; then collectivism failed even more abysmally. Today our "enlightened" social thinkers, having swung with rash violence from one extreme to another, are mostly engaged in the hopeful attempt to devise a foolproof compromise by which the "freedom" of liberalism would somehow be merged with the "security" of collectivism.

It is well to remember that the notion of the compromise is relatively new. Either-or thinking dominated the social field until early in the 1930's: either society was individualist or it was collectivist; and, if a socialist party came to power in a capitalist economy, it had no choice but to play the game according to capitalist rules. Thus in England a Labor government tried to fight the depression through the orthodoxy of deflation; and in Germany a Socialist economist like Fritz Naphtali could write in 1930, "I don't believe that we can do very much, nor anything very decisive, from the point of view of economic policy, to overcome the crisis until it has run its course."

The New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt made the first effective assault in a large-scale industrial economy on the either-capitalism-or-socialism style of thinking. At the time, of course, critics of both the right and the left regarded the New Deal as an unstable compromise, doomed either to move forward into collectivism or backward into collapse: in this period Kerensky was generally considered to be the

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symbol of the middle way. But time—and a growing appreciation of the Soviet experience—has suggested that the improvisations of the New Deal, far from leading capitalism into an untenable no-man's-land, have actually staked out the broad position toward which liberal socialists, in their recoil from totalitarianism, are being obliged to retire.

In a certain sense, the fruitful social thought of the last fifteen years has been an attempt to explore the terms of the New Deal compromise. Yet the exploration of a compromise is not necessarily the most thrilling type of intellectual endeavor. After living dangerously in the exciting land of either-or, social thought has now been compelled to enter the unromantic realm of more-or-less; and, in so doing, it has lost many people, especially intellectuals, who had a need for doing or dying, and would accept nothing less than the apocalypse. All of us tire quickly of the "mixed economy"—the very phrase sums up the decline of economics from a religion into a technique. We are unwilling to look into the tedious technicalities of compensatory fiscal policy; social security has become a bore; health insurance, another; and the Brannan plan is beyond comprehension. The politics of expediency, compromise, pragmatism—or, to put it in another way, the politics of democracy—seem just too dull.

Yet the middle way can survive only if it becomes sufficiently charged with faith to inspire people to fight and die for it. This is the problem which concerned both Dr. Popper and the late Dr. Mannheim. Their new books represent interesting and somewhat divergent attempts to work out social and philosophical bearings of the middle way.

The Open Society and Its Enemies is a big, abounding book—463 pages of text and 263 more pages of notes—crotchety, garrulous, opinionated, and, on the whole, valuable and interesting. Dr. Popper approaches the problem of the middle way through the spacious—but, in his account, sanguinary—avenues of the philosophy of history. He sees Western civilization as a great, continuing transition from the "closed society"—magical, tribal, collectivist, where the individual unquestioningly submits to irrational forces—to the "open society"—in which men are confronted with personal decisions to be made on the authority of their own critical intelligence.

The "closed society" has an organic, almost biological character. Consequently the experience of abandoning it produces a traumatic shock, leading to convulsive attempts to recapture the old securities. One form taken by this reaction, Dr. Popper suggests, is "historicism"—that is, the propagation of doctrines about historical inevitability, the addiction to long-term historical prophecies. "Historicism"—and, indeed, most other techniques of evading the responsibilities of freedom—he

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traces back to classical Greece and to the first and greatest opponent of the open society, the source of all later totalitarianism—Plato.

Expanding the indictment which Richard Crossman made a few years back in *Plato Today,* Popper launches a sharp and merciless polemic against Plato. He ends by convicting Plato of belief in most of the essentials of modern totalitarianism: the strict division between mass and elite; the identification of the state with the ruling class; the omnipresence of indoctrination and censorship. *The Republic* was a tract for the times, written to combat rising democratic sentiment in Athens; Plato, Popper surmises, was his own candidate for Philosopher-King.

Popper plainly regards Plato as an adversary worth his mettle; but he finds Hegel, the chief modern prophet of historicism, beneath contempt. "The Hegelian farce has done enough harm," he cries. "We must stop it. We must speak—even at the price of soiling ourselves by touching this scandalous thing." From Hegel Popper moves mercilessly on, his saber dripping with philosophical gore, to the modern varieties of Hegelianism—the Hegelian right wing, which became fascism, and the left wing, which became Communism.

His account of Marxism is intelligent and discriminating. "Marx's faith, I believe," he writes, "was fundamentally a faith in the open society"; and, if " 'scientific' Marxism is dead," yet "its feelings of social responsibility and its love for freedom must survive." But Marxism, Dr. Popper continues, is also "the purest, the most developed and the most dangerous form of historicism." This is the essential reason for its failure. Believing that history would create the concrete forms of the new society, Marx discouraged research in social technology. For all his professed dislike of utopianism, Marx stood for "utopian engineering," which plans the means in terms of an absolute end, sacrificing the present to a putative future. "The Utopian attempt to realize an ideal state, using a blueprint of society as a whole," Popper points out, "is one which demands a strong centralized rule of a few."

In place of utopian engineering, Popper calls for "piecemeal engineering"—the pragmatic application of the methods of science to the immediate problems of social reform. Where utopian engineering fights *for* an alleged "final good" of society, piecemeal engineering turns its energies *against* the greatest and most visible evils. Where the Marxist indulges in romantic fallacies about the omnipotence of economic power, the piecemeal engineer regards political power as fundamental: it can control economic power; it can limit exploitation, redistribute income, achieve economic stability—so long as the assurance of political democracy means some institutional control of the rulers by ruled.

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Economic intervention, Popper further argues, must take the form of planning the framework of the economy, not of trying to plan each and every economic decision. Above all, the piecemeal engineer must ask no questions about the tendencies of history or the destiny of man. "The future depends on ourselves, and we do not depend on any historical necessity."

This summary hardly suggests the qualities of this rich, voluble, exasperating book. Popper's story line is embellished all along the way by a bewildering variety of idiosyncratic opinions, *obiter dicta,* guffaws, snorts, sarcasms, and cries of outrage. His argument has its contradictions and inconsistencies. At times, he seems to suggest that ideas are everything: if only Plato and Hegel had held different doctrines, then the world would have moved carelessly and gracefully into the open society. Yet, for all this, the book has an indignant common sense on the crucial issues which makes it an important contribution to the revaluation of liberalism.

If Popper's manner is one of breaking windows and letting in air, Karl Mannheim seems always to be drawing the curtains and turning lights off. *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning,* a collection of papers assembled after Mannheim's death into a fairly coherent volume, is a clogged and earnest book. The argument drones on and on, taking an unconscionable time ever to pass a given point. Much of it is contaminated by what Popper calls historicism.

Yet it is a book with some points of interest. Mannheim came to Britain in 1933 with a basic faith in the idea of benevolent central planning. This faith was derived partly from the continental Social Democracy in which he was educated; partly from his conviction that the sociology of knowledge, by providing a means of exposing and controlling the role of self-interest in ideas, would lead to a new objectivity in the social sciences. But his British experience gave Mannheim a sense of the resources of pluralist society. Discussions with T. S. Eliot and J. Middleton Murry forced him to revise his attitude toward religion. These new influences are reflected in this last book.

Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning begins by rehearsing at too great length the familiar arguments about the disintegration of capitalist society, the rise of fascism and Communism and the need for something in between. Mannheim calls his "Third Way" *"planning for freedom";* and by this, it soon appears, he means central, overhead planning. The New Deal approach, for example, is dismissed as consisting of "piecemeal conceptions of preventive planning," while "the British pattern comes closest to what we call 'planning for freedom.' "

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Dr. Mannheim admits "a certain affinity" between central planning and the one-party system; but he aims nevertheless to make it compatible with a two-party system—and hence with political freedom—by establishing a new institution "outside the general machinery of the representative system though forming an integral part of the political process." This institution, which Mannheim calls "an Order," would consist of "the most prominent representatives of various strata and elements of the community" and would be "a kind of supreme tribunal to guarantee consistency and continuity in planning." "As in a religious order," Mannheim weirdly continues, "admission should require such rigorous commitments from members that the highest devotion and disinterestedness would be secured." And then he adds, even more weirdly, that this institution would remain "outside the contest for power."

Mannheim's editors insist that since 1935 his thoughts on planning have been haunted by the maxim: *quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* If the Order represents his considered solution to this problem, then his thinking clearly did not go very deep. The fact is that his conception of "the Age of Planning," for all its deference to the British experience,

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remains essentially collectivist. As W. Arthur Lewis, the British liberal Socialist economist, puts it in his brilliant book *The Principles of Economic Planning*, "The central issue in the discussion of planning is not whether there shall be planning but what form it shall take, and in particular whether the state shall operate through the price mechanism or in supercession of it." But Mannheim not only was incapable of formulating a question so directly and concretely; he just did not seem to see the basic importance for political freedom of indirect, New Deal-Keynesian controls (planning by inducement) as against centrally imposed, quantitative, physical controls (planning by direction).

This faith in central planning spills over into the larger field of intellectual freedom. Social science research, he blandly suggests, "through intelligence tests, interviews, expert observation of physical and mental development and dispositions, and expert guidance of vocational choices," could resolve the paradox of freedom in a planned world. Freedom, in other words, becomes only the appreciation of necessity. (It is this kind of thing which makes Popper spit out, "Once a Hegelian, always a Hegelian.")

"Democratically decided principles," Mannheim adds, must be accepted, and

> fundamental revision will only be forthcoming when a new start seems necessary. Even so, certain circles in society will continue to discuss the fundamentals of life, religion and society. Such discussions will have their place in a democratically planned social order. There will be provision for discussion, though no license will be granted for destructive action or sabotage of co-operation whenever it pleases the objector.

I hope I am not wrong in feeling that the last sentence has a distinctly ominous ring.

For all Mannheim's unmistakable earnestness and good will, his book remains fuzzy, vague and intolerably verbose on too many of the crucial questions of the middle way—and particularly on a range of questions to which Popper brings bracing and iconoclastic good sense. But at one point—and, indeed, at a point which provokes Popper to specific criticism—Mannheim is on the track of something important. That is on the question of the reliability of the individual will; it is the old problem whether knowledge of the good is enough to make us act to attain the good.

Neither Popper nor Mannheim are very clear on this issue. But Mannheim had a deep if foggy feeling that social science is being constantly deflected by the factors of self-interest which creep into social theory. "Knowledge and will or the rational element and the range of the irrational," he once put it, "are inseparably and essentially intertwined."

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This kind of statement drives Popper, at bottom a good nineteenth-century rationalist, to withering scorn. Mannheim's attempts to unveil the secret sources of ideas he ridicules as "socioanalysis"—the sociologist's brand of psychoanalysis. "Self-analysis," says Popper, "is no substitute for those practical actions which are necessary for establishing the democratic institutions which alone can guarantee the freedom of critical thought."

Granted; but how to guarantee that the "practical actions" be taken? The fact is that knowledge is not enough to produce right conduct. Popper himself is not unaware of the inadequacy of unassisted reason: he makes the appropriate references to Lord Acton. But his sense of the corruptibility of man is not vivid. A sturdy confidence in human rationality, indeed, is both his weakness and his strength.

Popper himself, in a rare mood of humility, confessed that, on revising his book for the American edition, "the strong feeling of optimism which pervades the whole book struck me more and more as naive. . . . My own voice began to sound to me as if it came from the distant past—like the voice of one of the hopeful social reformers of the eighteenth or even the seventeenth century." This essential optimism accounts for the book's tonic quality: it fizzes, but it also may go flat on long exposure to the air. For Popper's philosophy is really not wholly adequate to the somber dilemmas of our time.

The power of the closed society lies not alone in the historicist heresies of Plato, Hegel and Marx. It lies deep within ourselves. The open society calls for men who can continuously transcend their own limitations: this mere humanity has rarely been able to achieve. Of our contemporary social thinkers, Reinhold Niebuhr has cast most light on this tragic paradox. Popper, in his lucid and buoyant optimism, has little sense of the basic tragedy. Mannheim, fumbling and stumbling, seemed to have a vague intuition of it; but he kept telling himself that he could solve the tragedy by the "sociology of knowledge." Still both books are of interest; and Popper's particularly shows a bright, fresh and cocky mind usefully at work and play in the midst of the great social issues of our age.

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VARIETY

Stephen Spender

REFLECTIONS ON THE LITERARY LIFE

In the thirties I got into the habit of writing reviews. I do not think I reviewed better or worse than most reviewers, and I tried to be fair. On looking back, I see that instead of considering the book as a whole often I was too ready to take up certain points I agreed or disagreed with, and make them the subject of my review. If I read a book with the idea of writing a review, I approached it with a different attitude of mind from when I read out of simple curiosity. As a reviewer, when reading I was, as it were, interrupting what the writer had to say, by the pressure of my need to write my few hundred words, and this had much the same effect as not listening to someone's remarks because one is thinking how to answer them.

Once I had become deeply involved in the literary profession, I could not help approaching the works of all but a very few of my contemporaries, either in a spirit of rivalry, or by identifying my aims with theirs. Gone were the days when I read every new book which had been recommended to me, as it were open-mouthed, and expecting manna to fall. Now that I myself had appeared in print, I was like the owner of a race horse, who watches not only the performance of his own entrant but also keeps a sharp eye on the methods of other trainers.

It never occurred to me that anything I wrote might annoy the author I was reviewing. That he or anyone else should attach importance to my opinions appeared to me so unlikely that I often overstated them. But at a later date I knew so many writers and had experienced their hurt sensibilities so often that I lost my nerve in a way, and found myself unwilling to criticize the work of those I knew personally: not that I was frightened, but because I did not see how to do so without a certain awareness of the writer's personality entering into my own writing which would destroy its objectivity.

A part of my literary experience was not just reviewing but being reviewed. Here I showed all the vulnerability which I believed impossible with other writers. The good reviews which I received sometimes gave me a sense of being recognized with that warmth which is truly encouraging, but more often that of having scraped by the reviewer's defenses, with all my glaring faults. Adverse criticism was a terrible blow to me in my early days, and I still find adverse criticism of my poetry extremely discouraging. In fact, I think that it is more difficult for a poet than for other kinds of writer to "take" criticism. It is impossible to "prove" that a poem is good, and a refusal

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to enter into the illusion created by a poem, demonstrates that the poet has failed to communicate, at least with the reviewer. A poem succeeds completely or not at all.

Gradually I came to realize that the reviews which a writer receives are less his business than anyone else's. They are a kind of conversation which goes on behind his back. Reviewers do not address themselves to writers but to readers. To overhear conversations behind his back is more disconcerting than useful to the writer; though he can perhaps search out criticism in it which may really help him to remedy faults in style. But he should remember that the tendency of reviewers is to criticize work not for what it is but for what it fails to be, and it is not necessarily true that he should remedy this by trying to become other than he is. Thus, in my own experience, I have wasted time by paying heed to criticisms that I had no skill in employing rhyme. This led me to attempt rhyme, whereas I should have seen that the moral for me was to avoid it.

Economically, I found that there is much in common between the career of a writer and that of a gambler. A poem, "I think continually of those who were truly great," which was refused by several literary editors, was subsequently chosen to represent me in every anthology. On the whole, it holds true that a writer is paid best for doing his worst work; although sometimes, as in

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the case of the poem I have just mentioned, he may, almost accidentally, express, in a form which attracts a wide public, some idea which has great significance to him. Today, a special temptation of writers is that they can live largely by giving their views about subjects of which they know little. Because there is a popular idea that the writers are "wise," and since the public is not interested in the particular form in which this wisdom is best expressed, they are expected to be omniscient about any subjects which interest the public, such as Higher Education, Euthanasia, and the Atom Bomb.

I became involved in obligations to editors and publishers, accepting suggestions as to what I should write, instead of carrying out my original plans for novels, poems and stories. I began in my own mind to divide my work into three categories: poetry, my vocation; books about things which interested me, on subjects which were sometimes suggested by publishers; journalism, often hurriedly written.

This division of labor was not really satisfactory, for the reason that a creative writer should always write out of the inner necessity of a unique occasion. Not to do this, is to risk paying a price. The labor which he puts into studies not essential to his inner development, and the shoddiness of journalism, overflow into his creative work and confuse his sensibility. Or if these things do not happen, his best work becomes too ob-

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viously hedged off and separated from the rest.

Circumstances combined to make me attach too much importance to my opinions. For my views as critic, as journalistic observer, and as amateur politician, were all in demand, and sometimes the pressure to express them was not just economic, but came from events themselves, such as the need to take sides against fascism.

I found that my own views, however strongly held, bored me as soon as they were uttered. I realized that they concerned things which other people could express better, or that they arose out of the irritation of the moment, like an angry telegram. The effect of publishing too many opinions was like an inflation of the currency of my reputation, not only for others but —which was more serious—for myself. Before I published a line I felt a kind of awe at the idea of my own writing. Later I lost a good deal of this, and only recently have I determined to act so as to regain it. My resolution was rather banal; to take much greater pains over everything, including journalism, and to publish no poems for several years, so that I could in a way isolate my poetry from my other activities.

There is something about the literary life which, although it offers the writer freedom and honor enjoyed by very few, at the same time brings him a cup of bitterness with every meal. There is too much betrayal, there is a general atmosphere of intellectual disgrace, writers have to make too many concessions in order to support themselves and their families, the successful acquire an air of being elevated into public figures and therefore having lost their own personalities, the unsuccessful are too spiteful and vindictive and cliquey, and even the greatest, when they are attacked, reveal themselves often as touchy and vain. I think that almost every writer secretly feels that the literary career is not worthy of the writer's vocation. For this vocation resembles that of the religious, and yet few writers reflect this in their way of living.

Perhaps though, the writers belong to an order which is not only plunged into the world, but actually belongs to it and has to do so. Literature has its purists, both in work and life, but it would grow devitalized with more than a few of these in each generation, and some of the greatest writers (Dostoevsky, Balzac, even Yeats) have involved themselves in controversy and journalism.

If success is corrupting, failure is narrowing. What a writer really needs is a success of which he then purges himself. The writer's life should, in fact, be one of entering into external things and then withdrawing himself from them. Without entering in, he lacks experience of the world; and if he cannot withdraw, he is carried away on the impulse of literary politics, success, and the literary career.

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